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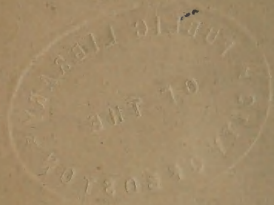
THE
SPIRITUAL GUIDE
OF
MICHAEL DE MOLINOS.

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THE SPIRITUAL GUIDE

WHICH

DISENTANGLES THE SOUL ;

AND BRINGS IT BY THE INWARD WAY TO THE
GETTING OF PERFECT CONTEMPLATION.

AND THE

Rich Treasure of Internal Peace.

WRITTEN BY

DR. MICHAEL DE MOLINOS, PRIEST.

ALSO THE SUBSTANCE OF SEVERAL LETTERS SENT
FROM ITALY CONCERNING THE QUIETISTS.

Translated from the Italian Copy.

5-200

PRINTED IN THE YEAR 1699.

THE FIRST PART OF THE HISTORY OF THE
LIFE OF THE LATE KING OF GREAT BRITAIN

CHARLES THE SECOND

BY JOHN BURNET, BISHOP OF SALTHERS

P R E F A C E.

THE way of inward peace is in all things to be conform to the pleasure and disposition of the Divine Will. *In omnibus debemus subijcere voluntatem nostram voluntati divinæ, hæc est enim pax voluntatis nostræ, ut sit per omnia conformis voluntati divinæ.* (Hugo Cardinalis in *Psal.* 13). Such as would have all things succeed and come to pass according to their own fancy, are not come to know this way, *Viam pacis non cognoverunt* (*Psalm* 13). And therefore lead a harsh and bitter life, always restless and out of humour, without treading in the way of peace, which consists in a total conformity to the will of God.

This Conformity is the sweet yoke that

introduces us into the regions of internal peace and serenity. Hence we may know, that the rebellion of our will is the chief occasion of our disquiet ; and that because we will not submit to the sweet yoke of the Divine Will, we suffer so many straits and perturbations. O soul ! If we submitted our own to the Divine Will, and to all His disposition, what tranquillity should we feel ! What sweet peace ! What inward serenity ! What supreme felicity, and earnest bliss ! This then is to be the burden of this book. May it please God to give me His divine light, for discovering the secret parts of this inward way, and chief felicity of perfect peace.

THE SPIRITUAL GUIDE

WHICH LEADS THE SOUL TO THE FRUITION
OF INWARD PEACE.

The First Part.

OF THE DARKNESS, DRYNESS, AND TEMPTATIONS,
WHEREWITH GOD PURGES SOULS, AND OF
INTERNAL RECOLLECTION.

CHAPTER I.

To the end God may rest in the soul, the heart is always to be kept peaceable in whatsoever disquiet, temptations and tribulation.

THOU art to know that thy soul is the centre, habitation and kingdom of God. That therefore, to the end the Sovereign King may rest on that throne of thy soul, thou oughtest to take pains to keep it clean, quiet, void and peaceable : clean from guilt and defects ; quiet from fears ; void of affections, desires and thoughts ; and peaceable in temptations and tribulations.

Thou oughtest always, then, to keep thine heart in peace, that thou mayest keep pure that temple of God, and with a right and pure intention, thou art to work, pray, obey, and suffer, without being in the least moved, whatever it pleases the Lord to send unto thee. Because it is certain, that for the good of the soul, and for thy spiritual profit, He will suffer the envious enemy to trouble that city of rest, and throne of peace, with temptations, suggestions and tribulations, and by the means of creatures with painful troubles, and grievous persecutions.

Be constant, and cheer up thine heart in whatsoever disquiet these tribulations may cause to thee. Enter within it, that thou mayest overcome it, for therein is the Divine fortress which defends, protects and fights for thee. If a man hath a safe fortress, he is not disquieted, though his enemies pursue him, because by retreating within it, these are disappointed and overcome. The strong castle that will make thee triumph over all thine enemies, visible and invisible, and over all their snares and tribulations, is within thine own soul, because in it resides the Divine aid and Sovereign succour. Retreat within it, and all will be quiet, secure, peaceable and calm.

It ought to be thy chief and continual exercise, to pacify that throne of thy heart, that the Supreme King may rest therein. The way to pacify it will be to enter into thyself by means of internal recollection ; all thy protection is to be prayer, and a loving recollection in the Divine presence. When thou seest thyself more sharply assaulted, retreat into that region of peace, where thou wilt find the fortress. When thou art more faint-hearted, betake thyself to this refuge of prayer, the only armour for overcoming the enemy, and mitigating tribulation : thou oughtest not to be at a distance from it in a storm, to the end thou mayest, as another Noah, experi-

ence tranquillity, security and serenity, and to the end thy will may be resigned, devoted, peaceful and courageous.

Finally, be not afflicted nor discouraged to see thyself faint-hearted, He returns to quiet thee, that still He may stir thee, because this Divine Lord will be alone with thee, to rest in thy soul, and form therein a rich throne of peace ; that within thine own heart, by means of internal recollection, and with His heavenly grace, thou mayest look for silence in tumult, solitude in company, light in darkness, forgetfulness in pressures, vigour in despondency, courage in fear, resistance in temptation, peace in war, and quiet in tribulation.

CHAPTER II.

Though the soul perceive itself deprived of discourse, or ratiocination, yet it ought to persevere in prayer, and not to be afflicted, because that is its greater felicity.

THOU wilt find thyself, as all other souls that are called by the Lord to the inward way, full of confusion and doubts, because in prayer thou hast failed in discourse. It will seem to thee that God does no more assist thee as for-

merly, that the exercise of prayer is not in thy power ; that thou lovest time, whilst hardly and with great trouble thou canst make one single ejaculation as thou wast wont to do.

How much confusion, and what perplexities will that want of enlarging thyself in mental discourse raise in thee ! And if in such a juncture thou hast not a ghostly father expert in the mystical way, thou wilt certainly conclude that thy soul is out of order, and that for the security of thy conscience, thou standest in need of a general confession ; and all that will be got by that care will be the shame and confusion of both. O how many souls are called to the inward way, and the spiritual fathers, for want of understanding their case, instead of guiding and helping them forwards, stop them in their course, and ruin them.

Thou oughtest then to be persuaded, that thou mayest not draw back, when thou wantest expansion and discourse in prayer ; that it is thy greatest happiness, because it is a clear sign that the Lord will have thee to walk by faith and silence in His Divine presence, which is the most profitable and easiest path ; in respect, that with a simple view, or amorous attention to God, the soul appears like a humble suppliant before its Lord, or as an innocent child, that casts itself

into the sweet and safe bosom of its dear mother. Thus did Gerson express it : *Though I have spent forty years in reading and prayer, yet I could never find anything more efficacious, nor compendious, for attaining to mystical theology, than that our spirit should become like a young child and beggar in the presence of God.*

That kind of prayer is not only the easiest, but the most secure ; because it is abstracted from the operations of the imagination, that is always exposed to the tricks of the devil, and the extravagances of melancholy, and ratiocination, wherein the soul is easily distracted, and being wrapt up in speculation, reflects on itself.

When God had a mind to instruct His own captain, Moses (Exod. xxiv.), and give him the two Tables of the Law, written in stone, He called him up to the mountain, at what time God being there with him, the mount was darkened, and environed with thick clouds, Moses standing idle, not knowing what to think or say. Seven days after, God commanded Moses to come up to the top of the mountain, wherein He showed him His glory, and filled him with great consolation.

So in the beginning, when God intends, after an extraordinary manner, to guide the soul into the school of the Divine and loving notices of the internal law, He makes it go with darkness

and dryness, that He may bring it near to Himself ; because the Divine Majesty knows very well, that it is not by the means of one's own ratiocination, or industry, that a soul draws near to Him, and understands the Divine documents ; but rather by silent and humble resignation.

The patriarch Noah gave a great instance of this ; who after he had been by all men reckoned a fool, floating in the middle of a raging sea, wherewith the whole world was overflowed, without sails and oars, and environed with wild beasts, that were shut up in the Ark, walked by faith alone, not knowing nor understanding what God had a mind to do with him.

What most concerns thee, O redeemed soul, is patience, not to desist from the prayer thou art about, though thou canst not enlarge in discourse. Walk with firm faith, and a holy silence, dying in thyself, with all thy natural industry, trusting that God, who is the same and changes not, neither can err, intends nothing but thy good. It is clear that he who is dying must needs feel it ; but how well is time employed, when the soul is dead, dumb, and resigned in the presence of God, there, without any clutter or distraction, to receive the Divine influences.

The senses are not capable of Divine blessings ;

hence if thou wouldst be happy and wise, be silent and believe, suffer and have patience, be confident and walk on ; it concerns thee far more to hold thy peace, and to let thyself be guided by the Hand of God, than to enjoy all the goods of this world. And though it seem to thee that thou dost nothing at all, and art idle, being so dumb and resigned, yet it is of infinite fruit.

Consider the blinded beast that turns the wheel of the mill, which though it see not, neither know what it does, yet does a great work in grinding the corn ; and although it taste not of it, yet its master receives the fruit, and tastes of the same. Who would not think during so long a time that the seed lies in the earth, but that it were lost ? Yet afterwards it is seen to spring up, grow and multiply. God does the same with the soul, when He deprives it of consideration and ratiocination. Whilst it thinks it does nothing, and is in a manner undone ; in time it comes to itself again, improved, disengaged, and perfect, having never hoped for so much favour.

Take care then that thou afflict not thyself, nor draw back, though thou canst not enlarge thyself, and discourse in prayer ; suffer, hold thy peace, and appear in the presence of God ; persevere constantly, and trust to His infinite bounty, who can give unto thee constant faith, true light, and

Divine grace. Walk as if thou wert blindfolded, without thinking or reasoning ; put thyself into His kind and paternal hands, resolving to do nothing but what His Divine will and pleasure is.

CHAPTER III.

A sequel of the same matter.

IT is the common opinion of all the holy men who have treated of the Spirit, and of all the mystical matters, that the soul cannot attain to perfection and an union with God, by means of meditation and ratiocination, because this is only good for beginning the spiritual way, to the end one may acquire a habit of knowledge, of the beauty of virtue, and ugliness of vice—which habit, in the opinion of Saint Teresa, may be attained to in six months' time ; and according to St. Bonaventure, in two (*In prolog. de Mist. Theol.*, p. 655).

O how are, in a manner, infinite number of souls to be pitied, who from the beginning of their life to the end, employ themselves in mere meditation, constraining themselves to reason, although God Almighty deprives them of ratiocination, that He may promote them to another state, and carry them on to a more perfect kind

of prayer, and so for many years they continue imperfect, and in the beginning without any progress, or having as yet made one step in the way of the Spirit ; beating their brains about the frame of the place, the choice of the minutes, imaginations, and strained reasonings, seeking God without, when in the meantime they have Him within themselves.

St. Austin complained of that, in the time when God led him to the mystical way, saying to His Divine Majesty, *I, Lord, went wandering like a strayed sheep, seeking Thee with anxious reasoning without, whilst Thou wast within me ; I wearied myself much in looking for Thee without, and yet Thou hast Thy habitation within me, if I long and breathe after Thee. I went round the streets and places of the city of this world, seeking Thee, and found Thee not ; because in vain I sought without for Him who was within myself (Soliloq., c. 31).*

The angelical Doctor St. Thomas, for all he was so circumspect in his writings, may seem yet to jeer those who go always in search of God without, by means of ratiocination, when they have Him present within themselves. *There is great blindness and excessive folly in some (says the Saint) who always seek God, continually sigh after God, often long for God, invoke and call upon God daily in prayer ; they themselves (according to*

the Apostle) being the living Temple of God, and His true habitation, since their soul is the seat and throne of God, where He continually rests. Who then but a fool will look for an instrument abroad, which he knows he has fast shut up within doors? Or, who can refresh himself with the food he desires, and yet not taste it? Such exactly is the life of some just men, always seeking and never enjoying, and therefore all their works are imperfect (Opusc. 63, c. 3 in fin).

It is certain that our Lord Christ taught perfection to all, and ever will have all to be perfect, particularly the ignorant and simple. He clearly manifested this truth, when for His apostles He chose the smallest and most ignorant, saying to his Eternal Father, *I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes* (Matth. xi.). And it is certain that these cannot acquire perfection by acute meditations and subtle reasonings, though they be as capable as the most learned, to attain to perfection by the affections of the will, wherein principally it consists. St. Bonaventure teaches us not to form conceptions of anything, no not of God, because it is imperfection to make representations, images and ideas, how subtle or ingenious soever, either of the will or of the goodness, Trinity

and Unity ; nay, of the Divine Essence itself—in respect that though all these representations appear *Deiform*, yet are they not God, who admits of no image or form. *Non ibi* (says the Saint) *oportet cogitare res de creaturis nec de, Angelis, nec de Trinitate, quia hæc sapientia, per affectus desideriorum, non per meditationem, prævium debet consurgere* (*Myst. Theol.*, p. 2, q. Un., p. 685). We must not here think anything of creatures, of angels, nor of God Himself, because that wisdom and perfection is not acquired by nice and quaint meditation, but by the desire and affection of the will.

The holy man cannot speak more clearly, and wouldst thou disquiet thyself, and leave off prayer, because thou knowest not, or canst not tell how to enlarge therein, though thou mayest have a good will, good desire, and pure intention ? If the young ravens, forsaken of the old, because seeing them without black feathers they think them spurious, are by the dew of Heaven fed, that they may not perish, what will He do to redeem souls, though they cannot speak nor reason, if they believe, trust, and open their mouths to Heaven, declaring their wants. Is it not more certain that the Divine bounty will provide for them, and give them their necessary food ?

Manifest it is, that it is a great martyrdom, and no small gift of God for the soul, finding itself deprived of the sensible pleasures it had, to walk by holy faith only, through the dark and desert paths of perfection, to which, notwithstanding, it can never attain but by this painful though secure means. Wherefore endeavour to be constant, and not draw back ; though discourse be wanting to thee in prayer, believe at that time firmly, be quietly silent, and patiently persevere, if thou wouldst be happy, and attain to the Divine union, eminent rest, and to the supreme internal peace.

CHAPTER IV.

The soul is not to afflict itself, nor intermit prayer, because it sees itself encompassed with dryness.

THOU shalt know that there are two sorts of prayer, the one tender, delightful, amiable, and full of sentiments ; the other obscure, dry, desolate, tempted and darksome. The first is of beginners, the second of proficients, who are in the progress to perfection. God gives the first to gain souls, the second to purify them. With the first He uses them like children ; with the second He begins to deal with them as with strong men.

The first way may be called the animal life, and belongs to them who go in the track of the sensible devotion, which God uses to give to beginners, to the end that being endowed with that small relish, as the natural man is with the sensible object, they may addict themselves to the spiritual life. The second is called the life of men, and belongs to those who, not minding sensible pleasures, fight and war against their own passions, that they may conquer and obtain perfection, the proper employment of men.

Assure thyself, that dryness or aridity is the instrument of thy good, because it is nothing else but a want of sensibility, that *Remora* which puts a stop to the flight of almost all spiritual men, and makes them even draw back, and leave off prayer—as may be seen in many souls, which only persevere whilst they taste sensible consolation.

Know that the Lord makes use of the vail of dryness, to the end we may not know what He is working in us, and so be humble ; because if we felt and knew what He is working in our souls, satisfaction and presumption would get in, imagining that we were doing some good thing, and reckoning ourselves very near to God : which would be our undoing.

Lay this down as a firm ground in thine heart,

that for walking in the inward way, all sensibility should first be removed ; and that the means God uses for that is dryness. By that also He takes away reflection, or that view whereby the soul eyes what it is doing, the only impediment that obstructs the advancing forward, and God's communicating Himself, and operating in it.

Thou oughtest not then to afflict thyself, nor think that thou reapest no fruit, because in coming from a communion or prayer, thou hast not the experience of many sentiments, since that is a manifest cheat. The husbandman sows in one time, and reaps in another. So God, upon occasions, and in His own due time, will help thee to resist temptations, and when least thou thinkest, will give thee holy purposes, and more effectual desires of serving Him. And to the end thou mayest not suffer thyself to be transported by the violent suggestion of the enemy, who will enviously persuade thee, that thou dost nothing, and that thou lovest time, that so thou mayest neglect prayer, I will declare to thee some of the infinite fruits that thy soul reaps from that great dryness.

The first is to persevere in prayer, from which fruit spring many other advantages.

2. Thou wilt find a loathing of the things of the world, which by little and little tends to the

stifling of the bad desires of thy past life, and the producing of other new ones of serving God.

3. Thou wilt reflect upon many failings, on which formerly thou didst not reflect.

4. Thou wilt find, when thou art about to commit any evil, an advertency in thy heart, which restrains thee from the execution of it, and at other times from speaking, lamenting, or revenging thyself; that will take thee off from some little earthly pleasure, or from this or the other occasion, or conversation, into which formerly thou wast running in great peace and security, without the least check or remorse of conscience.

5. After that through frailty thou hast fallen into some light fault, thou wilt feel a reproof for it in thy soul, which will exceedingly afflict thee.

6. Thou wilt feel within thyself desires of suffering, and of doing the Will of God.

7. An inclination to virtue, and greater ease in overcoming thyself, and conquering the difficulties of the passions, and enemies that hinder thee in the way.

8. Thou wilt know thyself better, and be con-founded also in thyself, feel in thee a high esteem of God above all created beings, a contempt of creatures, and a firm resolution not to abandon prayer, though thou knowest that it will prove to thee a most cruel martyrdom.

9. Thou wilt be sensible of greater peace in thy soul, love to humility, confidence in God, submission, and abstraction from all creatures ; and finally, the sins thou hast omitted since the time thou exercisedst thyself in prayer, are so many signs that the Lord is working in thy soul (though thou knowest it not) by means of dry prayer ; and although thou feelest it not whilst thou art in prayer, thou wilt feel it in His due time, when He shall think it fit.

All these, and many other fruits, are like new buds that spring from the prayer which thou wouldst give over, because it seems to thee to be dry, that thou seest no fruit of it, and reapest no advantage therefrom. Be constant and persevere with patience, for though thou knowest it not, thy soul is profited thereby.

It is not to be said, that the soul is idle ; because though it operate not *actively*, yet the Holy Ghost operates in it. Besides that it is not without activity, because it operates, though spiritually, simply and intimately. For to be attentive to God, draw near to Him, to follow His internal inspirations, receive His Divine influences, adore Him in His own intimate centre, reverence Him with the pious affections of the will, to cast away so many and so fantastical imaginations, and with softness and contempt to overcome so many

temptations : all these, I say, are true acts, though simple, wholly spiritual, and in a manner imperceptible, through the great tranquillity wherewith the soul exerts them.

CHAPTER V.

The soul is not to be disquieted, that it sees itself encompassed with darkness, because that is an instrument of its greater felicity.

THERE are two sorts of darknesses—some unhappy, and others happy. The first are such as arise from sin, and are unhappy, because they lead the soul to an eternal precipice. The second are those which the Lord suffers to be in the soul, to ground and settle it in virtue ; and these are happy, because they enlighten it, fortify it, and cause greater light therein, so that thou oughtest not to grieve and disturb thyself, nor be disconsolated in seeing thyself obscure and darksome, judging that God hath failed thee, and the light also that thou formerly hadst the experience of ; thou oughtest rather at that time to persevere constantly in prayer, it being a manifest sign that God of His infinite mercy intends to bring thee into the inward path, and happy way of Paradise. O how happy wilt thou be

if thou embrace it with peace and resignation, as the instrument of perfect quiet, true light, and of all thy spiritual good.

Know then that the straightest, most perfect and secure way of proficients, is the way of darkneses, because in them the Lord placed His own Throne ; And *He made darkness His secret place* (Psal. xviii.). By them the supernatural light, which God infuses into the soul, grows and increases ; amidst them, wisdom and strong love are begotten ; by darkness the soul is annihilated, and the *species*, which hinders the right view of the Divine Truth, are consumed. By this means God introduces the soul by the inward way into the prayer of rest, and of perfect contemplation, which so few have the experience of. Finally, by darkness the Lord purges the senses and sensibility, which hinder the mystical progress.

See now if darkneses be not to be esteemed and embraced. What thou oughtest to do amidst them, is to believe that thou art before the Lord, and in His presence ; but thou oughtest to do so with a sweet and quiet attention, not desire to know anything, nor search after delicacies, tendernesses, or sensible devotions, nor do anything but what is the good will and pleasure of God ; because otherwise thou wilt only make circles all thy life time, and not advance one step towards perfection.

CHAPTER VI.

To the end the soul may attain to the supreme internal peace, it is necessary that God purge it after His way, because the exercises and mortifications that of itself it sets about, are not sufficient.

SO soon as thou shalt firmly resolve to mortify thy external senses, that thou mayest advance towards the high mountain of perfection and union with God, His Divine Majesty will set His hand to the purging of thy evil inclinations, inordinate desires, vain complacency, self-love and pride, and other hidden vices, which thou knowest not, and yet reign in the inner parts of thy soul, and hinder the Divine union.

Thou wilt never attain to this happy state, though thou tire thyself out with the external acts of mortification and resignation, until this Lord purge thee inwardly, and discipline thee after His own way, because He alone knows how secret faults are to be purged out. If thou persevere constantly, He will not only purge thee from affections and engagements to natural and temporal goods, but in His own time also He will purify thee with the supernatural and sublime; such as are internal communications, inward raptures

and ecstasies, and other infused graces, on which the soul rests and enjoys itself.

God will do all this in thy soul by means of the cross and dryness, if thou freely givest thy consent to it by resignation, and walking through those darksome and desert ways. All thou hast to do is to do nothing by thy own choice alone. The subjection of thy liberty is that which thou oughtest to do, quietly resigning thyself up in everything, whereby the Lord shall think fit internally and externally to mortify thee : because that is the only means by which thy soul can become capable of the Divine influences, whilst thou sufferest internal and external tribulation, with humility, patience and quiet ; not the penances, disciplines and mortifications which thou couldst impose thyself.

The husbandman sets a greater esteem upon the plants which he sows in the ground than those that spring up of themselves, because these never come to seasonable maturity. In the same manner God esteems, and is better pleased with, the virtue which He sows and infuses into the soul (as being sunk into its own nothingness, calm and quiet, retreated within its own centre, and without any election) than all the other virtues which the soul pretends to acquire by its own election and endeavours.

It concerns thee only, then, to prepare thine heart like clean paper, wherein the Divine wisdom may imprint characters to His own liking. O how great a work will it be for thy soul to be whole hours together in prayer, dumb, resigned and humble, without acting, knowing, or desiring to understand anything !

CHAPTER VII.

A sequel of the same.

WITH new efforts thou wilt exercise thyself, but in another manner than hitherto, giving thy consent to receive the secret and Divine operations, and to be polished and purified by the Lord, which is the only means whereby thou wilt become clean and purged from thy ignorance and dissolutions. Know, however, that thou art to be plunged into a bitter sea of sorrows, and of internal and external pains, which torment will pierce into the most inward part of thy soul and body.

Thou wilt experience that the creatures will forsake thee, nay, those too from which thou hopedst for most favour and compassion in thy straits : the brooks of thy faculties will be so dried up, that thou shalt not be able to form any ratiocination ; nay, nor so much as to conceive a good

thought of God. Heaven will seem to thee to be of brass, and thou shalt receive no light from it. Nor will the thought comfort thee that in times past so much light and devout consolation hath shone into thy soul.

The invisible enemies will pursue thee with scruples, lascivious suggestions, and unclean thoughts, with incentives to impatience, pride, rage, cursing, and blaspheming the name of God, His sacraments and holy mysteries. Thou wilt find a great lukewarmness, loathing and wearisomeness for the things of God, an obscurity and darkness in thy understanding, a faintness, confusion and narrowness of heart; such a coldness and feebleness of the will to resist, that a straw will appear to thee a beam. Thy desertion will be so great that thou wilt think there is no more a God for thee, and that thou art rendered incapable of entertaining a good desire; so that thou wilt continue shut up betwixt two walls, in constant straits and anguish, without any hopes of ever getting out of so dreadful an oppression.

But fear not: all this is necessary for purging thy soul, and making it know its own misery, and sensibly perceive the annihilation of all the passions and disordinate appetites, wherewith it rejoiced itself. Finally, to the end the Lord may refine and purify thee after His own manner

with those inward torments, wilt thou not cast the Jonas of sense into the sea, that thereby thou mayest procure it? With all thy outward disciplines and mortifications, thou wilt never have true light, nor make one step towards perfection: so that thou wilt stop in the beginning, and thy soul will not attain to the amiable rest and supreme internal peace.

CHAPTER VIII.

The soul ought not to be disquieted, nor draw back in the spiritual way, because it finds itself assaulted by temptations.

OUR own nature is so base, proud and ambitious, and so full of its own appetites, its own judgment and opinions, that if temptations restrained it not, it would be undone without remedy. The Lord, then, seeing our misery and perverse inclination, and thereby moved to compassion, suffers us to be assaulted by divers thoughts against the faith, horrible temptations, and by violent and painful suggestions of impatience, pride, gluttony, luxury, rage, blasphemy, cursing, despair, and an infinite number of others, to the end we may know ourselves and be humble. With these horrible temptations,

that infinite Goodness humbles our pride, giving us in them the most wholesome medicine.

All our righteousnesses (as Isaiah saith, chap. lxiv. 6) *are as filthy rags*, through the stains of vanity, conceitedness, and self-love. It is necessary they be purified with the fire of tribulation, and temptation, that so they may be clean, pure, perfect, and agreeable to the eyes of God.

Therefore the Lord purifies the soul which He calls, and will have for Himself, with the rough file of temptation, with which He polishes it from the rust of pride, avarice, vanity, ambition, presumption, and self-conceitedness. With the same He humbles, pacifies and exercises it, making it to know its own misery. By means thereof He purifies and strips the heart, to the end all its operations may be pure, and of inestimable value.

Many souls, when they suffer those painful torments, are troubled, afflicted and disquieted, it seeming to them that they begin already in this life to suffer eternal punishments ; and if by misfortune they go to an inexperienced confessor, instead of comforting them, he leaves them in greater confusion and perplexities.

That thou mayest not lose internal peace, it is necessary thou believe that it is the goodness of Divine mercy, when thus it humbles, afflicts and tries thee ; since by that means thy soul comes

to have a deep knowledge of itself, reckoning itself the worst, most impious and abominable of all souls living, and hence with humility and lowliness it abhors itself. O how happy would souls be if they would be quiet, and believe that all these temptations are caused by the devil, and received from the hand of God, for their gain and spiritual profit !

But thou wilt say, that it is not the work of the devil when He molests thee by means of creatures, but the effects of thy neighbours' faults and malice, in having wronged and injured thee. Know that that is another cunning and hidden temptation, because though God wills not the sin of another, yet He wills his own effects in thee, and the trouble which accrues to thee from another's faults, that He may see thee improved by the benefit of patience.

Dost thou receive an injury from any man ? There are two things in it, the sin of him that does it, and the punishment that thou sufferest ; the sin is against the will of God, and displeases Him, though He permit it ; the punishment is conform to His will, and He wills it for thy good ; wherefore thou oughtest to receive it, as from His hand. The Passion and Death of our Lord Christ were the effects of the wickedness and sins of Pilate ; and yet it is certain that God

willed the death of His own Son for our redemption.

Consider how the Lord makes use of another's fault for the good of thy soul. O the greatness of the Divine Wisdom ! Who can pry into the depths of the secret and extraordinary means, and the hidden parts whereby He guides the soul, which He would have purged, transformed and deified ?

CHAPTER IX.

Wherein the same point is handled.

THAT the soul may be the habitation of the Celestial King, it is necessary that it should be pure, and without any blemish ; wherefore the Lord purifies it as gold in the furnace of terrible and grievous temptations. Certain it is, that the soul never loves, nor believes more, than when it is afflicted and baited with such temptations ; because those doubtings and fears that beset it, whether it believes or not, whether it consents or not, are nothing else but the quaintnesses of love.

The effects that remain in the soul make this very clear ; and commonly these are a loathing of itself, with a most profound acknowledgment of the greatness and omnipotence of God, a

great confidence in the Lord, that He will deliver it from all risk and danger ; believing and confessing with far greater vigour of faith, that it is God who gives it strength to bear the torments of these temptations, because it would naturally be impossible, considering the force and violence wherewith sometimes they attack, to resist one quarter of an hour.

Thou art to know then, that temptation is thy great happiness ; so that the more it besets thee, the more thou oughtest to rejoice in peace, instead of being sad, and thank God for the favour He does thee. In all those temptations, and odious thoughts, the remedy that is to work, is to despise them with a stayed neglect, because nothing more afflicts the proud devil, than to see that he is slighted and despised, as are all things else that he suggests to us. And therefore thou art to tarry with him, as one that perceives him not, and to possess thyself in thy peace without repining, and without multiplying reasons and answers ; seeing nothing is more dangerous than to vie in reasons with him who is ready to deceive thee.

The saints in arriving at holiness, passed through this doleful valley of temptations ; and the greater saints they were, the greater temptations they grappled with. Nay, after the saints have attained to holiness and perfection, the Lord

suffers them to be tempted with brisk temptations, that their crown may be the greater, and that the spirit of vainglory may be checked, or else hindered from entering in them, keeping them in that manner secure, humble, and solicitous of their condition.

Finally, thou art to know, that the greatest temptation is to be without temptation ; wherefore thou oughtest to be glad when it assaults thee, and with resignation, peace and constancy, resist it. Because if thou wilt serve God, and arrive at the sublime region of internal peace, thou must pass through that rugged path of temptation, put on that happy armour, fight in that fierce and cruel war, and in that burning furnace, polish, purge, renew, and purify thyself.

CHAPTER X.

Declaring the nature of internal recollection, and instructing the soul how it ought to behave itself therein, and the spiritual warfare, whereby the devil endeavours to disturb it at that time.

INTERNAL recollection is faith, and silence in the presence of God. Hence thou oughtest to be accustomed to recollect thyself in His presence, with an affectionate attention, as one that

is given up to God, and united unto Him, with reverence, humility and submission, beholding Him in the most inward recess of thine own soul, without form, likeness, manner, or figure ; in the view and general nature of a living and obscure faith, without any distinction of perfection or attribute.

There thou art to be with attention, and a sincere regard, with a sedate heedfulness, and full of love towards the same Lord, resigning and delivering thyself up into His hands, to the end He may dispose of thee, according to His good will and pleasure, without reflecting on thyself ; nay, nor on perfection itself. Here thou art to shut up the senses, trusting God with all the care of thy welfare, and minding nothing of the affairs of this life. Finally, thy faith ought to be pure without representations or likeness, simple without reasonings, and universal without distinctions.

The prayer of internal recollection may be well typified by that wrestling which the Holy Scriptures say the patriarch Jacob had all night with God, until day broke, and He blessed him. Wherefore the soul is to persevere, and wrestle with the difficulties that it will find in internal recollection, without desisting, until the sun of internal light begin to appear, and the Lord give it His blessing.

No sooner wilt thou have given thyself up to thy Lord in this inward way, but all hell will conspire against thee ; seeing one single soul inwardly retired to its own presence, makes greater war against the enemy, than a thousand others that walk externally ; because the devil makes an infinite advantage of an internal soul.

In the time of the recollection, peace and resignation of thy soul, God will more esteem the various, impertinent, troublesome and ugly thoughts in that thou hast, than the good purposes, and high sentiments. Know that the effort which thou thyself mayest make to resist thoughts, is an impediment, and will leave thy soul in greater anxiety. The best thing that is to be done, is sweetly to despise them, to know thine own wretchedness, and peacefully make an offering to God of the trouble.

Though thou canst not get rid of the anguish of thoughts, hast no light, comfort, nor spiritual sentiment, yet be not afflicted, neither leave off recollection, because they are the snares of the enemy. Resign thyself at that time with vigour, endure with patience, and persevere in His presence, for whilst thou perseverest after that manner, thy soul will be internally improved.

Dost thou believe that when thou comest away from prayer dry, in the same manner as thou

began in, that that was because of want of preparation, and that it hath done thee no good. That is a fallacy ; because the fruit of true prayer consists not in enjoying the light, nor in having knowledge of spiritual things, since those may be found in a speculative intellect, without true virtue and perfection ; it only consists in enduring with patience, and persevering in faith and silence, believing that thou art in the Lord's presence, turning to Him thy heart with tranquillity and purity of mind. So whilst thou perseverest in this manner, thou wilt have the only preparation and disposition which at that time is necessary, and shalt reap infinite fruit.

War is very usual in this internal recollection, which on the one hand will deprive thee of sensibility, to try, humble and purge thee. On the other, invisible enemies will assault thee with continual suggestions, to trouble and disquiet thee. Nature herself, apparently, will torment thee, she being always an enemy to the spirit, which in depriving her of sensible pleasures, remains weak, melancholy, and full of irksomeness, so that it feels a hell in all spiritual exercises, particularly in that of prayer : hence it grows extremely impatient to be at an end of it, through the uneasiness of thoughts, the lassitude of body, importunate sleep, and thou not being able to

curb the senses, every one of which would for its own share follow its own pleasure. Happy art thou if thou canst persevere amidst this martyrdom.

That great doctress, and mystical mistress, Saint Teresa, confirms all this by her heavenly doctrine, in the letter she wrote to the Bishop of Osmia, to instruct him how he was to behave himself in prayer, and in the variety of troublesome thoughts, which attack us at that time ; where she says, *There is a necessity of suffering the trouble of a troop of thoughts, importune imaginations, and the impetuosities of natural notions, not only of the soul, through the dryness and disunion it hath, but of the body also, occasioned by the want of submission to the spirit, which it ought to have* (8 of her *Epistolary*).

These are called drynesses in spirituals, but are very profitable, if they be embraced and suffered with patience. Whoso shall accustom himself to suffer them without repining, will from that labour draw vast advantage. It is certain, that in recollection the devil frequently charges the soul more fiercely with a battalion of thoughts, to discomfit the quiet of the soul, and alienate it from that most sweet and secure internal conversation, raising horrors, to the end it may leave it off, reducing it most commonly to such

a state, as if it were led forth to a most rigorous torment.

The birds, which are the devils, knowing this (said the saint in the above-cited letter), prick and molest the soul with imaginations, troublesome thoughts, and the interruptions which the devil at that time brings in, transporting the thoughts, distracting them from one thing to another, and, after he had done with them, attacking the heart; and it is no small fruit of prayer patiently to suffer these troubles and importunities. That is an offering up of one's self in a whole burnt sacrifice, that is to say, to be wholly consumed in the fire of temptation, and no part spared. See how this heavenly mistress encourages to suffer and endure thoughts and temptations; because, provided they be not consented to, they double the profit.

As many times as thou exercisest thyself calmly to reject these vain thoughts, so many crowns will the Lord set upon thy head; and though it may seem to thee that thou dost nothing, be undeceived; for a good desire, with firmness and steadfastness in prayer, is very pleasing to the Lord.

Wherefore to be there (concludes the saint), without sensible profit, is not lost time, but of great gain, whilst one toils without interest, and merely for the glory of God; and though it may seem to be toiling

in vain, yet it is not so ; but it is as with children, who toil and labour under the power of their fathers—though in the evening they receive not the wages for their day's work, yet at the year's end they enjoy all. In fine, you see how the saint confirms our document with her precious doctrine.

CHAPTER XI.

A Sequel of the same Matter.

GOD loves not him who does most, who hears most, nor who shows greatest affection, but who suffers most, if he pray with faith and reverence, believing that he is in the Divine presence. The truth is, to take from the soul the prayer of the senses and of nature is a rigorous martyrdom to it ; but the Lord rejoices and is glad in its peace, if it be thus quiet and resigned. Use not at that time vocal prayer, because however it be good and holy in itself, yet to use it then is a manifest temptation, whereby the enemy pretends that God speaks not to thy heart, under pretext that thou hast not sentiments, and that thou lovest time.

God hath no regard to the multitude of words, but to the purity of the intent. His greatest content and glory at that time is to see the soul in

silence, desirous, humble, quiet, and resigned. Proceed, persevere, pray, and hold thy peace ; for where thou findest not a sentiment, thou wilt find a door whereby thou mayest enter into thine own nothingness, knowing thyself to be nothing, that thou canst do nothing ; nay, and that thou hast not so much as a good thought.

How many have begun this happy practice of prayer and internal recollection, and have left it off, pretending that they felt no pleasure, that they lose time, that their thoughts trouble them, and that that prayer is not for them, whilst they find not any sentiment of God, nor any ability to reason or discourse ; whereas they might have believed, been silent, and had patience ! All this is no more but with ingratitude to hunt after sensible pleasures, suffering themselves to be transported with self-love, seeking themselves, and not God, because they cannot suffer a little pain and dryness, without reflecting on the infinite loss they sustain ; whereas by the least act of reverence towards God, amidst dryness and sterility, they receive an eternal reward.

The Lord told the venerable Mother Francesca Lopaz of Valenza, and a religious of the third Order of St. Francis, three things of great light and consequence in order to internal recollection : *In the first place, that a quarter of an hour of prayer*

with recollection of the senses and faculties, and with resignation and humility, does more good to the soul than five days of penitential exercises, hair-cloths, disciplines, fastings, and sleeping on bare boards, because these are only mortifications of the body, and with recollection the soul is purified.

Secondly, that it is more pleasing to the Divine Majesty to have the soul in quiet and devout prayer for the space of an hour than to go in great pilgrimages; because that in prayer it does good to itself, and to those for whom it prays, gives delight to God, and merits a high degree of glory; but in pilgrimage, commonly, the soul is distracted, and the senses diverted with a debilitation of virtue, besides many other dangers.

Thirdly, that constant prayer was to keep the heart always right towards God; and that a soul, to be internal, ought rather to act with the affection of the will than the toil of the intellect. All this is to be read in her Life.

The more the soul rejoices in sensible love, the less delight God has in it; on the contrary, the less the soul rejoices in this sensible love, the more God delights in it. And know, that to fix the will on God, restraining thoughts and temptations, with the greatest tranquillity possible, is the highest pitch of praying.

I will conclude this chapter by undeceiving

thee of the vulgar error of those who say, that in this internal recollection, or prayer of rest, the faculties operate not, and that the soul is idle and wholly inactive. This is a manifest fallacy of those who have little experience, because although it operates not by means of the memory, nor by the second operation of the intellect, which is the judgment, nor by the third, which is discourse or ratiocination, yet it operates by the first and chief operation of the intellect, which is simple apprehension enlightened by holy faith, and aided by the Divine gifts of the Holy Spirit. And the will is more apt to continue one act than to multiply many ; so that as well the act of the intellect, as that of the will, is so simple, imperceptible, and spiritual, that hardly the soul knows them, and far less reflects upon them.

CHAPTER XII.

What the Soul ought to do in Internal Recollection.

THOU oughtest to go to prayer, that thou mayest deliver thyself wholly up into the hands of God, with perfect resignation, exerting an act of faith, believing that thou art in the Divine presence, afterwards settling in that holy repose, with quietness, silence, and tranquillity ; and

endeavouring for a whole day, a whole year, and thy whole life, to continue that first act of contemplation, by faith and love.

It is not your businesses to multiply these acts, nor to repeat sensible affections, because they hinder the purity of the spiritual and perfect act of the will, whilst besides that these sweet sentiments are imperfect (considering the reflection wherewith they are made, the self-content and external consolation wherewith they are sought after, the soul being drawn outwards to the external faculties), there is no necessity of renewing them, as the mystical Falcon hath excellently expressed it by the following similitude :—

If a jewel given to a friend were once put into his hands, it is not necessary to repeat such a donation already made, by daily telling him, “Sir, I give you that jewel,” “Sir, I give you that jewel,” but to let him keep it, and not take it from him, because provided he take it not, or design not to take it from him, he hath surely given it him.

In the same manner, having once dedicated and lovingly resigned thyself to the will of God, there is nothing else for thee to do but to continue the same, without repeating new and sensible acts, provided thou takest not back the jewel thou hast once given, by committing some notable fault against His Divine will ; though

thou oughtest still to exercise thyself outwardly in the external works of thy calling and state, for in so doing thou doest the will of God, and walkest in continual and virtual oration : *He always prays* (said Theophylact) *who does good works, nor does he neglect prayer but when he leaves off to be just.*

Thou oughtest then to slight all those sensibilities, to the end thy soul may be established, and acquire a habit of internal recollection, which is so effectual, that the resolution only of going to prayer awakens a lively presence of God, which is the preparation to the prayer that is about to be made ; or, to say better, is no other than a more efficacious continuation of continual prayer, wherein the contemplative person ought to be settled.

Oh, how well did the venerable mother of Cantal, the spiritual daughter of St. Francis of Sales, practise this lesson, in whose life are the following words, written to her master : *Most dear father, I cannot do any act, it seems to me always that this is the most firm and secure disposition : My spirit in the upper part is in a most simple unity ; it is not united, because when it would perform acts of union (which it often sets about) it finds difficulty, and clearly perceives that it cannot unite, but be united. The soul would make use of this union, for the service of Matins, the Holy Mass, preparation*

for the Communion, and Thanksgiving ; and in a word, it would for all things be always in that most simple unity of spirit, without reflecting on anything else. To all this the holy father answered with approbation, persuading her to persist, and putting her in mind that the repose of God is in peace.

Another time she wrote to the same saint these words : *Endeavouring to do some more special acts of my simple intuition, total resignation, and annihilation in God, His Divine goodness rebuked me, and gave me to understand that that proceeded only from the love of myself, and that thereby I offended my soul.*

By this thou wilt be undeceived, and know what is the perfect and spiritual way of praying, and be advised what is to be done in internal recollection. Thou wilt know that to the end love may be perfect and pure, it is expedient to retrench the multiplication of sensible and fervent acts, the soul continuing quiet, and resting in that inward silence. Because tenderness, delight, and sweet sentiments, which the soul experiences in the will, are not pure spirits, but acts blended with the sensibility of nature. Nor is it perfect love, but sensible pleasure, which distracts and hurts the soul, as the Lord told the venerable mother of Cantal.

How happy and how well applied will thy soul be, if, retreating within itself, it there shrink into its own nothing, both in its centre and superior part, without minding what it does; whether it recollect or not; whether it walk well or ill; if it operate or not; without heeding, thinking, or minding any sensible thing! At that time the intellect believes with a pure act, and the will loves with perfect love, without any kind of impediment, imitating that pure and continued act of intuition and love, which the saints say the blessed in heaven have, with no other difference than that they see one another there face to face, and the soul here through the veil of an obscure faith.

Oh, how few are the souls that attain to this perfect way of praying, because they penetrate not enough into this internal recollection and mystical silence, and because they strip not themselves of imperfect reflection and sensible pleasure! Oh, that thy soul, without thoughtful advertency, even of itself, might give itself in prayer to that holy and spiritual tranquillity, and say with St. Austin, *Sileat anima mea, et transeat se, non se cogitando!* (In his *Confess.*, lib. 8, cap. 10.) Let it be silent and do nothing, forget itself, and plunge into that obscure faith. How secure and safe would it be, though it might

seem to it, that thus inactive and doing nothing, it were undone !

I will sum up this doctrine with a letter that the illuminated mother of Cantal wrote to a sister and great servant of God : *Divine bounty* (said she) *granted me this way of prayer that, with a single view of God, I felt myself wholly dedicated to Him, absorpt and reposed in Him. He still continued to me that grace, though I opposed it by my infidelity, giving way to fear, and thinking myself unprofitable in that state ; for which cause, being willing to do something on my part, I quite spoiled all ; and to this present I find myself sometimes assaulted by the same fear, though not in prayer, but in other exercises wherein I am always willing to employ myself a little, though I know very well that in doing such acts I come out of my centre, and see particularly that that simple view of God is my only remedy and help still, in all troubles, temptations, and the events of this life.*

And certainly would I have followed my internal impulse, I should have made use of no other means in anything whatsoever, without exception ; because when I think to fortify my soul with arts, reasonings, and resignations, then do I expose myself to new temptations and straits. Besides that, I cannot do it without great violence, which leaves me exhausted and dry, so that it behoves me speedily to

return to this simple resignation, knowing that God in this manner lets me see that it is His will and pleasure that a total stop should be put to the operations of my soul, because He would have all things done by His Own Divine activity ; and happily He expects no more of me, but this only view in all spiritual exercises and in all the pains, temptations, and afflictions that may befall me in this life. And the truth is, the quieter I keep my spirit by this means, the better all things succeed with me ; and my crosses and afflictions suddenly vanish. Many times hath my blessed father, St. Francis of Sales, assured me of this.

Our late Mother Superior encouraged me firmly to persist in that way and not to fear anything in this simple view of God. She told me that that was enough ; and that the greater the nakedness and quietness in God are, the greater sweetness and strength receiveth the soul, which ought to endeavour to become so pure and simple that it should have no other support but in God alone.

To this purpose I remember that a few days since God communicated to me an illumination, which made such an impression upon me as if I had clearly seen Him ; and this it is, that I should never look upon myself, but walk with eyes shut, leaning on my beloved, without striving to see or know the way by which He guides me, neither fix my thoughts on

anything nor yet beg favours of Him, but as undone in myself rest wholly and sincerely on Him. Hitherto that illuminated and mystical mistress whose words do credit and authorise our doctrine.

CHAPTER XIII.

Declaring how the soul, putting itself in the presence of God with perfect resignation by the pure act of Faith, walks always in virtual and acquired contemplation.

THOU wilt tell me (as many souls have told me) that though by a perfect resignation thou hast put thyself in the presence of God, by means of pure faith, as hath been already hinted, yet thou dost not merit nor improve, because thy thoughts are so distracted that thou canst not be fixed upon God.

Be not disconsolate, for thou dost not lose time nor merit, neither desist thou from prayer ; because it is not necessary that during that whole time of recollection thou shouldst actually think on God ; it is enough that thou hast been attentive in the beginning, provided thou discontinue not thy purpose, nor revoke the actual attention which thou hadst. As he who hears Mass, and says the Divine Office, performs his duty very well, by virtue of that primary actual

attention, though afterwards he persevere not, in keeping his thoughts actually fixed on God.

This the angelical doctor, St. Thomas, confirms, in the following words : *That first intention only and thinking on God when one prays has force and value enough to make the prayer during all the rest of the time it continues to be true, impetratory, and meritorious, though all that while there be no actual contemplation on God* (22 quæst. 82 art. 13 ad. 1). See now if the saints could speak more clearly to our purpose !

So that (in the judgment of that Saint) the prayer still continues, though the imagination may ramble upon infinite numbers of thoughts, provided one consent not to it, shift not place, intermit not the prayer, nor change the first intention of being with God. And it is certain that he changes it not, whilst he does not leave his place ; hence it follows in sound doctrine that one may persevere in prayer, though the imagination be carried about with various and involuntary thoughts. *He prays in spirit and in truth* (says the saint in the fore-cited place) *whoever goes to prayer with the spirit and intention of praying, though afterwards through misery and frailty his thoughts may straggle.* Evagatio vero mentis quæ sit præter propositum, orationis fructum non tollit.

. But thou wilt say, at least, Art thou not to remember when thou art in the presence of God? and often say to Him, *Lord, abide within me; and I will give myself wholly up to Thee.* I answer that there is no necessity for that, seeing thou hast a design to pray, and for that end went to that place. Faith and intention are sufficient, and these always continue; nay, the more simple that remembrance is, without words or thoughts, the more pure, spiritual, internal, and worthy of God it is.

Would it not be impertinent and disrespectful if, being in the presence of a king, thou shouldst every now and then say to him, *Sir, I believe your Majesty is here!* It is the very same thing. By the eye of pure faith the soul sees God, believes in Him, and is in His presence; and so when the soul believes, it has no need to say, *My God, thou art here;* but to believe as it does believe, seeing when prayer time is come, faith and intention guide and conduct it to contemplate God by means of pure faith and perfect resignation.

So that, so long as thou retractest not that faith and intention of being resigned, thou walkest always in faith and resignation, and consequently in prayer, and in virtual and acquired contemplation, although thou perceive it not, remember it not, neither exertest new acts and reflections thereon; after the example of a Christian, a wife,

and a monk, who, though they exert us new acts and remembrances, the one as to his profession, saying, *I am a monk*, the other as to her matrimony, saying, *I am a wife*, and the third as to his baptism, saying, *I am a Christian*; they cease not for all that from being, the one baptised, the other married, and the third professed. The Christian shall only be obliged to do good works in confirmation of his faith, and to believe more with the heart than with the mouth. The wife ought to give demonstrations of the fidelity which she promised to her husband, and the monk of the obedience which he made profession of to his superior.

In the same manner, the inward soul being once resolved to believe that God is in it, and that it will not desire nor act anything but through God, ought to rest satisfied in that faith and intention in all its works and exercises, without forming or repeating new acts of the same faith, or of such a resignation.

CHAPTER XIV.

A Sequel of the same Matter.

THIS true doctrine serves not only for the time of prayer, but also after it is over, by night and by day, at all hours, and in all the

daily functions of thy calling, thy duty and condition. And if thou tell me, that many times thou forgettest during a whole day to renew thy resignation, I answer, that though it seem to thee that thou art diverted from it, by attending the daily occupations of thy vocation, as studying, reading, preaching, eating, drinking, doing business, and the like, thou art mistaken ; for the one destroys not the other, nor by so doing dost thou neglect to do the will of God, nor to proceed in virtual prayer, as St. Thomas says.

Because these occupations are not contrary to His will, nor contrary to thy resignation ; it being certain that God would have thee to eat, study, take pains, do business, &c. So that to perform these exercises, which are conformed to His will and pleasure, thou departest not out of His presence, nor from thine own resignation.

But if in prayer, or out of it, thou shouldst willingly be diverted or distracted, suffering thyself deliberately to be transported into any passion, then it will be good for thee to revert to God, and return into His Divine presence, renewing the purest acts of faith and resignation. However it is not necessary to exert those acts, when thou findest thyself in dryness, because dryness is good and holy, and cannot, how severe soever it be, take from the soul the Divine pre-

sence, which is established in faith. Thou oughtest never to call dryness distraction, because in beginners it is want of sensibility, and in proficients abstractedness, by means whereof, if thou bear it out with constancy, resting quiet in thine own emptiness, thy soul will become more and more inward, and the Lord will work wonders in it.

Strive then when thou comest from prayer, to the end thou mayest return to it again, not to be distracted, nor diverted, but to carry thyself with a total resignation to the Divine will ; that God may do with thee and all thine according to His heavenly pleasure, relying on Him as on a kind and loving father. Never recall that intention, and though thou shouldst be taken up about the affairs of the condition wherein God hath placed thee, yet thou wilt still be in prayer in the presence of God, and in perpetual acts of resignation. Therefore St. John Chrysostom said, *A just man leaves not off to pray unless he leaves off to be just. He always prays who always does well ; the good desire is prayer, and if the desire be continued, so is also the prayer.* (Super 5, ad Thessolon.)

Thou wilt understand all that has been said by this clear example : When a man begins a journey to Rome, every step he makes in the progress is voluntary ; and nevertheless it is not necessary that at every step he shall express his

desire, or exert a new act of the will, saying, *I am going to Rome, I go to Rome* ; because by virtue of that first intention he had of travelling to Rome, the same will still remains in him ; so he goes on without saying so, though he does not without intending so ; you will clearly find, besides, that this traveller, with one single and explicit act of the will and intention, travels, speaks, hear, sees, reasons, eats, drinks, and does several other things, without any interruption to his first intention, nor yet of his actual journeying to Rome.

It is just so in the contemplative soul : A man having once made the resolution of doing the will of God, and of being in His presence, he still perseveres in that act, so long as he recalls not the same, although he be taken up in hearing, speaking, eating, or in any other external good work or function of his calling and quality. St. Thomas Aquinas expresseth all this in few words : *Non enim oportet quod qui propter Deum aliquod iter arripuit, in qualibet parte itineris de Deo cogitet actu* (Contra Gentiles, l. 3, c. 138, un. 2).

Thou wilt say that all Christians walk in this exercise, because all have faith, and may, although they be not internal, fulfil this doctrine, especially such as go in the external way of meditation and ratiocination. It is true, all Christians have faith, and more particularly they who meditate and

consider. But the faith of those who advance by the inward way is much different, because it is a lively faith, universal and indistinct, and by consequence more practical, active, effectual, and illuminated ; insomuch as the Holy Ghost enlightens the soul that is best disposed most ; and that soul is always best disposed which holds the mind recollected ; for proportionably to the recollection the Holy Ghost illuminates. And albeit it be true that God communicates some light in meditation, yet it is so scanty and different from that which He communicates to the mind, recollected in a pure and universal faith, that the one to the other is no more than like two or three drops of water in respect of an ocean : since in meditation two or three particular truths are communicated to the soul ; but in the internal recollection, and the exercise of a pure and universal faith, the wisdom of God is an abundant ocean which is communicated in that obscure, simple, general, and universal knowledge.

In like manner resignation is more perfect in these souls, because it springs from the internal and infused fortitude, which grows as the internal exercise of pure faith, with silence and resignation, is continued ; in the manner that the gifts of God's Spirit grow in contemplative souls. For though these Divine gifts are to be found in all those that

are in a state of grace ; nevertheless they are as it were dead, without strength, and in a manner infinitely different from those which reign in contemplative persons, by reason of their illustration, vivacity, and efficacy.

From all which be persuaded that the inward soul, accustomed to go daily at certain hours to prayer, with the faith and resignation I have mentioned to thee, walks continually in the presence of God. All holy, expert, and mystical masters teach this true and important doctrine, because they have all had one and the same Master, who is the Holy Ghost.

CHAPTER XV.

A way by which one may enter into internal recollection, through the most Holy Humanity of our Lord Christ.

THERE are two sorts of spiritual men, diametrically contrary to one another. The one say, That the mysteries of the Passion of Christ are always to be considered and meditated upon. The others, running to the opposite extreme, teach, That the meditation of the mysteries of the Life, Passion, and Death of our Saviour is not prayer, nor yet a remembrance of them ; but the exalted elevation to God, whose Divinity

contemplates the soul in quiet and silence, ought only to be called prayer.

It is certain that our Lord Christ is the Guide, the Door, and the Way ; as He Himself hath said in His own Words, *I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life* (John xiv). And before the soul can be fit to enter into the presence of the Divinity, and to be united with it, it is to be washed with the precious Blood of a Redeemer, and adorned with the rich robes of His Passion.

Our Lord Christ with His doctrine and example is the Mirror, the Guide of the soul, the Way, and the only Door by which we enter into those pastures of life eternal, and into the vast ocean of the Divinity. Hence it follows that the remembrance of the Passion and Death of our Saviour ought not wholly to be blotted out ; nay, it is also certain, that whatsoever high elevation of mind the soul may be raised to, it ought not in all things to separate from the most holy humanity. But then it follows not from hence neither that the soul accustomed to internal recollection, that can no longer ratiocinate, should always be meditating on, and considering (as the other spiritualists say) the most holy mysteries of our Saviour. It is holy and good to meditate ; and would to God that all men of this world practised it ! And the soul besides, with facility,

ought to be let alone in that state, and not pushed on to another higher, so long as in that of meditation it finds nourishment and profit.

It belongs to God alone, and not to the spiritual guide, to promote the soul from meditation to contemplation; because if God, through His special grace, call it not to this state of prayer, the guide can do nothing with all his wisdom and instructions.

To take a secure means then, and to avoid those two so contrary extremes, of not wholly blotting out the remembrance of the humanity, and of not having it continually before our eyes, we ought to suppose that there are two ways of attending the holy humanity, that one may enter at the Divine port, which is Christ our well-being. The first is by considering the mysteries, and meditating the actions of the Life, Passion, and Death of our Saviour. The second by thinking on Him, by the application of the intellect, pure faith, or memory.

When the soul proceeds, in perfecting and interiorising itself, by means of internal recollection, having for some time meditated on the mysteries whereof it hath been already informed, then it retains faith and love to the Word Incarnate, being ready for His sake to do what ever He inspires into it, walking according to His precepts,

although they be not always before its eyes. As if it should be said to a son that he ought never to forsake his father, they intend not thereby to oblige him to have his father always in sight, but only to have him always in his memory, that in time and place he may be ready to his duty.

The soul then that is entered into internal recollection, with the opinion and approbation of an expert guide, hath no need to enter by the first door of meditation on the mysteries, being always taken up in meditating upon them, because that is not to be done without great *fatigue* to the intellect ; nor does it stand in need of such ratiocinations, since these serve only as a means to attain to believing that which it hath already got the *possession* of.

The most noble, spiritual, and proper way for souls that are proficient in internal recollection to enter by the humanity of Christ our Lord, and entertain a remembrance of Him, is the second way ; eying that humanity, and the passion thereof, by a simple act of faith, looking and reflecting on the same as the Tabernacle of the Divinity, the beginning and end of our salvation, Jesus Christ having been born, suffered, and died a shameful death for our sakes.

This is the way that makes internal souls profit, and this holy, pious, swift, and instantaneous re-

membrance of the humanity can be no obstacle to them in the course of internal recollection, unless, if when the soul enters into prayer, it finds itself drawn back ; for then it will be better to continue recollection and mental exercise. But not finding itself drawn back, the simple and swift remembrance of the humanity of the Divine Word gives no impediment to the highest and most elevated, the most abstracted and transformed soul.

This is the way that Santa Teresa recommends to the contemplative, rejecting the tumultuary opinions of some school men. This is the straight and safe way, free from dangers, which the Lord hath taught to *many souls*, for attaining to repose and the holy tranquillity of contemplation.

Let the soul then, when it enters into recollection, place itself at the gate of Divine mercy, which is the amiable and sweet remembrance of the Cross and Passion of the Word that was made man, and died for love ; let it stand there with humility, resigned to the will of God, in whatsoever it pleases the Divine Majesty to do with it ; and if from that holy and sweet remembrance it soon falls into forgetfulness, there is no necessity of making a new repetition, but to continue silent and quiet in the presence of the Lord.

Wonderfully does St. Paul favour this our doc-

trine in the epistle which he wrote to the *Colossians*, wherein he exhorts them and us, that whether we eat, drink, or do anything else, we should do it in the name and for the sake of Jesus Christ. *Omne quod cunq. facitis in verbo, aut in opere, omnia in nomine Jesu Christi facite, gratias agentes Deo et Patri per ipsum.* God grant that we may all begin by Jesus Christ, and that in Him and by Him alone we may arrive at perfection.

CHAPTER XVI.

Of Internal and Mystical Silence.

THERE are three kinds of silence ; the first is of words, the second of desires, and the third of thoughts. The first is perfect ; the second more perfect ; and the third most perfect. In the first, that is, of words, virtue is acquired ; in the second, to wit, of desires, quietness is attained to ; in the third, of thoughts, internal recollection is gained. By not speaking, nor desiring, and not thinking, one arrives at the true and perfect mystical silence, wherein God speaks with the soul, communicates Himself to it, and in the abyss of its own depth teaches it the most perfect and exalted wisdom.

He calls and guides it to this inward solitude and mystical silence, when He says that He will

speak to it alone, in the most secret and hidden part of the heart. Thou art to keep thyself in this mystical silence if thou wouldst hear the sweet and divine voice. It is not enough for gaining this treasure to forsake the world, nor to renounce thine own desires, and all things created, if thou wean not thyself from all desires and all things created ; if thou wean not thyself from all desires and thoughts. Rest in this mystical silence, and open the door, that so God may communicate Himself unto thee, unite with thee, and then form thee into Himself.

The perfection of the soul consists not in speaking, nor in thinking much on God, but in loving Him sufficiently. This love is attained to by means of perfect resignation and internal silence ; all consists in works. The love of God has but few words. Thus St. John the Evangelist confirms and inculcates it : *My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth* (Epist. 1, chap. iii., v. 18).

Thou art clearly convinced now that perfect love consists not in amorous acts, nor tender ejaculations, nor yet in the internal acts, wherein thou tellest God that thou hast an infinite love for Him, and thou lovest Him more than thyself. It may be that at that time thou seekest more thyself, and the love of thyself, than the true love of God,

because love consists in works, and not in fair discourses.

That a rational creature may understand the secret desire and intention of thy heart, there is a necessity that thou shouldst express it to him in words. But God, who searches the heart, standeth not in need that thou shouldest make profession, and assure Him of it ; nor does He rest satisfied, as the evangelist says, with love in word nor in tongue, but with that which is true and in deed. What avails it to tell Him, with great zeal and fervour, that thou tenderly and perfectly lovest Him above all things, if at one bitter word or slight injury thou dost not resign thyself, nor art mortified for the love of Him ?—a manifest proof that thy love was a love in tongue, and not in deed.

Strive to be resigned in all things with silence, and in so doing, without saying that thou lovest Him, thou wilt attain to the most perfect, quiet, and effectual and true love. St. Peter most affectionately told the Lord, that for His sake he was ready willingly to lay down his life ; but at the word of a young damsel he denied Him, and there was an end of his zeal. Mary Magdalen said not a word, and yet the Lord Himself, taken with her perfect love, became her panegyrist, saying that she had loved much. It is internally,

then, that with dumb silence the most perfect virtues of faith, hope, and charity are practised, without any necessity of telling God that thou lovest Him, hopest and believest in Him ; because the Lord knows better than thou dost what the internal motions of thy heart are.

How well was that pure act of love understood and practised by that profound and great mystic, the venerable Gregory Lopez, whose whole life was a continual prayer and a continued act of contemplation, and of so pure and spiritual love of God, that it never gave way to affections and sensible sentiments !

Having for the space of three years continued that ejaculation, *Thy will be done in time and in eternity*, repeating it as often as he breathed, God Almighty discovered to him that infinite treasure of the pure and continued act of faith and love, with silence and resignation ; so that he came to say, that during the thirty-six years he lived after, he always continued, in his inward man, that pure act of love, without ever uttering the least petition, ejaculation, or anything that was sensible or sprung from nature. O Incarnate Seraph and Deified Man ! how well didst Thou know how to dive into that internal and mystical silence, and to distinguish betwixt the outward and inward man !

THE SPIRITUAL GUIDE

WHICH BRINGS THE SOUL TO THE GETTING
OF INWARD PEACE.

The Second Part.

OF SPIRITUAL MARTYRDOMS WHEREBY GOD
PURGES SOULS ; OF CONTEMPLATION, IN-
FUSED AND PASSIVE ; OF PERFECT RESIGNA-
TION, INWARD HUMILITY, DIVINE WISDOM,
TRUE ANNIHILATION, AND INTERNAL PEACE.

CHAPTER I.

The difference between the Outward and Inward Man.

THERE are two sorts of spiritual persons, internal and external : these seek God without, by discourse, by imagination and consideration : they endeavour mainly to get virtues by many abstinences, maceration of body, and mortification of the senses : they give themselves to rigorous penance ; they put on sackcloth, chastise the flesh by discipline, endeavour silence, bear the presence of God, forming Him present to themselves in their idea of Him, or their imagination, sometimes as a Pastor, sometimes as a Physician, and sometimes as a Father and Lord ; they delight to be continually seeking of God, very often making fervent acts of love ; and all this is art and meditation. By this way they desire to be great, and by the power of voluntary and exterior mortification they go in quest of sensible affections and warm sentiments, thinking that God resides only in them when they have them.

This is the external way and the way of be-

ginners ; and though it be good, yet there is no arriving at perfection by it ; nay, there is not so much as one step towards it, as experience shows in many that, after fifty years of this external exercise, are void to God and full of themselves, having nothing of a spiritual man, but just the name of such.

There are others truly spiritual, which have passed by the beginnings of the interior way which leads to perfection and union with God ; and to which the Lord called them by His infinite mercy from that outward way in which before they exercised themselves. These men retired in the inward part of their souls with true resignation into the hands of God, with a total putting off and forgetting even of themselves ; do always go with a raised spirit to the presence of the Lord, by the means of pure faith, without image, form, or figure, but with great assurance founded in tranquillity and rest internal, in whose infused meeting and entertainment the Spirit draws with so much force, that it makes the soul contract inwardly, the heart, the body, and all the powers of it.

The souls, as they are already passed by the interior mortification, and have been cleared by God with the fire of tribulation, with infinite and horrible torments, all of them ordained by His

hand, and after His way, are masters of themselves, because they are entirely subdued and denied, which makes them live with great repose and internal peace. And although on many occasions they feel resistance and temptations, yet they become presently victorious, because being already souls of proof, and endued with Divine strength, the motions of passions cannot last long upon them ; and although vehement temptations and troublesome suggestions of the enemy may persevere a long time about them, they are all conquered, with infinite gain, God being He that fights within them.

These souls have already procured themselves a greater light, and a true knowledge of Christ our Lord, both of His divinity and His humanity. They exercise this infused knowledge with a quiet silence in the inward entertainment, and the superior part of their souls, with a spirit free from images and external recollections, with a love that is pure and stripped of all creatures ; they are raised also from outward actions to the love of humanity and divinity ; so much as they enjoy, they forget, and in all of it they find that they love their God with all their heart and spirit.

These blessed and sublimated souls take no pleasure in anything of the world, but in con-

tempt, and in being alone, and in being forsaken and forgotten by everybody. They live so disinterested and taken off, that though they continually receive many supernatural graces, yet they are not changed, no, not at those inclinations, being just as if they had not received them, keeping always in the inmost of their hearts a great lowliness and contempt of themselves ; always humbled in the depth of their own unworthiness and vileness. In the same manner they are always quiet, serene, and possessed with evenness of mind in graces and favours extraordinary, as also in the most rigorous and bitter torments. There is no news that fears them, no success that makes them glad : tribulations never disturb them, nor the interior, continual, and Divine communications make them vain and conceited ; they remain always full of holy and filial fear, in a wonderful peace, constancy, and serenity.

CHAPTER II.

Pursues the same.

IN the external way they take care to do continual acts of all the virtues one after another, to get to the attainment of them. They pretend to purge imperfections with industries proportionable to destruction ; they take care to

root up interests one after another with a different and contrary exercise. But though they endeavour never so much, they arrive at nothing ; because we cannot do anything which is not imperfection and misery.

But in the inward way and loving entertainment in the presence Divine, as the Lord is He that works, virtue is established, interests are rooted up, imperfections are destroyed, and passions removed, which makes the soul free unexpectedly, and taken off, when occasions are represented, without so much as thinking of the good which God of His infinite mercy prepared for them.

It must be known that these souls, though thus perfect, as they have the true light of God, yet by it they know profoundly their own miseries, weaknesses, and imperfections, and what they yet want to arrive at perfection, towards which they are walking ; they are afflicted and abhor themselves ; they exercise themselves in a loving fear of God and contempt of themselves, but with a true hope in God and disconfidence in themselves. The more they are humble with true contempt and knowledge of themselves, the more they please God, and arrive at a singular respect and veneration in His presence. Of all the good works that they do, and of all that they con-

tinually suffer, as well within as without, they make no manner of account before that Divine presence.

Their continual exercise is to enter into themselves, in God, with quiet and silence, because there is His centre, habitation, and delight. They make a greater account of this interior retirement, than of speaking of God ; they retire into that interior and secret centre of the soul, to know God, and receive His Divine influence with fear and loving reverence ; if they go out, they go out only to know and despise themselves.

But know, that few are the souls which arrive at this happy state ; because few there are that are willing to embrace contempt, and suffer themselves to be refined and purified ; upon which account, although they are many that enter into this interior way, yet it is a rare thing for a soul to go on and not stick upon the entrance. The Lord said to a soul, *This inward way is trod by few ; it is so high a grace that none deserves it : few walk in it, because it is no other than a death of the senses ; and few there be that are willing so to die and be annihilated ; in which disposition this so sovereign a gift is founded.*

Herewith thou wilt undeceive thyself, and perfectly know the great difference which there is between the external and internal way, and

how different that presence of God is, which arises from meditation, from that which is infused and supernatural, arising from the interior and infused entertainment, and from passive contemplation; and lastly, you will know the great difference which is between the outward and inward man.

CHAPTER III.

The means of obtaining peace internal is not the delight of sense; not spiritual consolation, but the denying of self-love.

IT is the saying of St. Bernard, that to serve God is nothing else but to do good and suffer evil. He that would go to perfection by the means of sweetness and consolation is mistaken. You must desire no other consolation from God than to end your life for His sake, in the state of true obedience and subjection. Christ our Lord's way was not that of sweetness and softness, nor did He invite us to any such, either by His words or example, when He said,—*He that will come after Me, let him deny himself, and let him take up his cross and follow Me* (Mark viii. 34). The soul that would be united to Christ must be conformable to Him, and follow Him in the way of suffering.

Thou wilt scarce begin to relish the sweetness or Divine love in prayer, but the enemy with his deceitful craftiness will be kindling in thy heart desires of the desert and solitude, that thou mayest without anybody's hindrance spread the sails to continual and delightful prayers. Open thine eyes, and consider that this counsel and desire is not conformable to the true counsel of Christ our Lord, who has not invited us to follow the sweetness and comfort of our own will, but the denying of ourselves, saying, *Abneget semetipsum*. As if He should say, He that will follow Me, and come unto perfection, let him part with his own will wholly ; and, leaving all things, let him entirely submit to the yoke of obedience and subjection, by means of self-denial, which is the truest cross.

There are many souls dedicated to God, which receive from His hand great thoughts, visions, and mental elevations ; and yet for all that, the Lord keeps from them the grace of working miracles, understanding hidden secrets, foretelling future contingencies, as He communicates these things to other souls which have constantly gone through tribulations, temptations, and the true cross, in the state of perfect humility, obedience, and subjection.

Oh, what a great happiness is it for a soul to be

subdued and subject ! what great riches is it to be poor ! what a mighty honour to be despised ! what a height is it to be beaten down ! what a comfort is it to be afflicted ! what a credit of knowledge is it to be reputed ignorant ! and finally, what a happiness of happinesses is it to be crucified with Christ ! This is that lot which the Apostle gloried in, *Nos autem gloriari oportet in cruce Domini nostri Jesu Christi* (Gal. vi. 14). Let others boast in their riches, dignities, delights, and honours ; but to us there is no higher honour than to be denied, despised, and crucified with Christ.

But what a grief is this, that scarce is there one soul which prizes spiritual pleasures, and is willing to be denied for Christ, embracing His cross with love. *Multi sunt vocati ; pauci vero electi* (Matt. xxii.), says the Holy Ghost : many are they who are called to perfection, but few are they that arrive at it ; because they are few who embrace the cross with patience, constancy, peace, and resignation.

To deny one's self in all things, to be subject to another's judgment, to mortify continually all inward passions, to annihilate one's self in all respects, to follow always that which is contrary to one's own will, appetite, and judgment, are things that few can do : many are those that

teach them, but few are they that practise them.

Many souls have undertaken, and daily do undertake this way ; and they persevere all the while they keep the sweet relish of their primitive fervour ; but this sweetness and sensible delight is scarce done, but presently, upon the overtaking of a storm of trouble, temptation, and dryness (which are necessary things to help a man up the high mountain of perfection), they falter and turn back, a clear sign that they sought themselves, and not God or perfection.

May it please God that the souls which have had light, and been called to an inward peace, and by not being constant in dryness, and tribulation, and temptation, have started back, may not be cast into outward darkness, with him that had not on him a wedding garment ; although he was a servant, for not being disposed, giving himself up to self-love.

This monster must be vanquished, this seven-headed beast of self-love must be beheaded, in order to get up to the top of the high mountain of peace. This monster puts his head everywhere ; sometimes it gets amongst relations, which strangely hinder with their conversations ; to which nature easily lets itself be led : sometimes it gets, with a good look of gratitude, into

passionate affection, and without restraint, towards the confessor ; sometimes into affection to most subtle spiritual vain glories and temporal ones, and niceties of honour ; which things stick very close ; sometimes it cleaves to spiritual pleasures, staying even in the gifts of God, and in His graces freely bestowed : sometimes it desires exceedingly the preservation of health, and with disguise, to be used well, and its own profit and conveniences : sometimes it would seem well with very curious subtilties ; and lastly, it cleaves with a notable propensity to its own proper judgment and opinion in all things, the roots of which are closely fixed in its own will. All these are effects of self-love, and if they be not denied, impossible it is that a man should ever get up to the height of perfect contemplation, to the highest happiness of the loving union, and the lofty throne of peace internal.

CHAPTER IV.

Of two Spiritual Martyrdoms, wherewith God cleanseth the soul that He unites with Himself.

NOW you shall know that God uses two ways for the cleansing the souls which He would perfect and enlighten, to unite them closely to Himself. The first (of which we will treat in

this and the following chapter) is with the bitter waters of afflictions, anguish, distress, and inward torments. The second is with the burning fire of an inflamed love, a love impatient and hungry. Sometimes He makes use of both in those souls which He would fill with perfection ; sometimes He puts them into the strong steeping of tribulations and inward and outward bitterness, scorching them with the fire of rigorous temptation ; sometimes He puts them into the crucible of anxious and distrustful love, making them fast there with a mighty force ; because so much the greater as the Lord would have the illumination and union of a soul to be, so much the more strong is the torment and the purgation ; because all the knowledge and union with God arises from suffering, which is the truest proof of love.

O that thou wouldst understand the great good of tribulation ! This is that which blots out sins, cleanses the soul, and produces patience ; this in prayer inflames it, enlarges it, and puts it upon the exercise of the most sublime act of charity ; this rejoices the soul, brings it near to God, calls it to, and gives it entrance into, heaven. The same is that which tries the true servants of God, and renders them sweet, valiant, and constant : that is it which makes God hear them with speed. *Ad dominum, cum tribularer*

clamavi, et exaudivit me (Psal. xviii. 6). It is that which annihilates, refines, and perfects them : and finally, this is that which of earthly makes souls heavenly ; of human, Divine ; transforming them and uniting them in an admirable manner with the Lord's humanity and divinity. It was well said by St. Augustine that the life of the soul upon earth is temptation. Blessed is the soul which is always opposed, if it doth constantly resist temptation. This is the means which the Lord makes use of to humble it, to annihilate it, to spend it, to mortify it, to deny it, to perfect it, and fill it with His Divine gifts. By this means of tribulation and temptation He comes to crown it and transform it. Persuade thyself that temptations and fightings are necessary for the soul to make it perfect.

O blessed soul, if thou knowest how to be content and quiet in the fire of tribulation, and wouldst but let thyself be washed with the bitter waters of affliction, how quickly wouldst thou find thyself rich in heavenly gifts ! how soon would the Divine bounty make a rich throne in thy soul, and a goodly habitation for thee to refresh and solace thyself in it !

Know that this Lord hath His repose nowhere but in quiet souls, and in those in which the fire of tribulation and temptation hath burnt up the

dregs of passions, and the bitter water of afflictions hath washed off the filthy spots of inordinate appetites ; in a word, this Lord reposes not Himself anywhere, but where quietness reigns and self-love is banished.

But thou wilt never arrive at this happy state, nor find in thy soul the precious pledge of peace internal, although thou hast gotten the better of the external senses by the grace of God, till it become purified from the disordered passions of concupiscence, self-esteem, desire and thoughts, how spiritual soever, and many other interests and secret vices which lie within the very soul of thee, miserably hindering the peaceable entrance of that great Lord into it, who would be united and transformed with thee.

The very virtues acquired, and not purified, are a hindrance to this great gift of the peace of the soul ; and more, the soul is clogged by an inordinate desire of sublime gifts, by the appetite of feeling spiritual consolation, by sticking to infused and Divine graces, entertaining itself in them, and desiring more of them, to enjoy them, and finally, by a desiring of being great.

O how much is there to be purified in a soul that must arrive at the holy mountain of perfection and of transformation with God ! O how disposed, naked, denied, annihilated ought the

soul to be, which would not hinder the entrance of this Divine Lord into it, nor His continual communication.

This disposition of preparing the soul, in its bottom, for Divine entrance must of necessity be made by the Divine wisdom. If a seraph is not sufficient to purify the soul, how shall a soul that is frail, miserable, and without experience ever be able to purify itself?

Therefore the Lord Himself will dispose thee and prepare thee passively by a way thou understandest not, with the fire of tribulation and inward torment, without any other disposition on thy side than a consent to the internal and external cross.

Thou wilt find within thyself a passive dryness, darkness, anguish, contradictions, continual resistance, inward desertions, horrible desolations, continual and strong suggestions, and vehement temptations of the enemy ; finally, thou wilt see thyself so afflicted that thou wilt not be able to lift up thy heart, being full of sorrow and heaviness, nor do the least act of faith, hope, or charity.

Here thou wilt see thyself forlorn and subject to passions of impatience, anger, rage, swearing, and disordered appetites, seeming to thyself the most miserable creature, the greatest sinner in the

world, the most abhorred of God, deprived and stripped of all virtue, with a pain like that of hell, seeing thyself afflicted and desolate, to think that thou hast altogether lost God ; this will be thy cruel, cutting, and most bitter torment.

But though thou shalt see thyself so oppressed, seeming to thyself to be proud, impatient and wrathful, yet these temptations shall lose their force and power upon thee ; they have no place in thy soul, by secret virtue, the sovereign gift of inward strength, which rules in the inmost part of it, conquering the most affrightening punishment and pain and the strongest temptation.

Keep constant, O blessed soul, keep constant ; for it will not be as thou imaginest, nor art thou at any time nearer to God than in such cases of desertion ; for although the sun is hid in the clouds, yet it changes not its place nor a jot the more loses its brightness. The Lord permits this painful desertion in thy soul, to purge and polish thee, to cleanse and disrobe thee of thyself ; and thou mayest in this manner be all His and give thyself wholly up to Him, as His infinite bounty is entirely given to thee, that thou mayest be His delight ; for although thou dost groan and lament and weep, yet He is joyful and glad in the most secret and hidden place of thy soul.

CHAPTER V.

How important and necessary it is to the interior soul to suffer blindfold this first and spiritual martyrdom.

TO the end that the soul of earthly may become heavenly and may come to that greatest good of union with God, it is necessary for it to be purified in the fire of tribulation and temptation : and though it be true and a known and approved maxim that all those that serve the Lord must suffer troubles, persecutions, and tribulations, yet the happy souls which are guided by God by the secret way of the interior walk and of purgative contemplation must suffer, above all, strong and horrible temptations and torments, more bitter than those wherewith the martyrs were crowned in the Primitive Church.

The martyrs, besides the shortness of their torment, which hardly endured days, were comforted with a clear light and special help in hope of the near and sure reward. But the desolate soul that must die in itself and put off and make clean its heart, seeing itself abandoned by God, surrounded by temptations, darkness, anguish, affliction, sorrow, and rigid drouths, doth taste of death every moment in its painful temptations

and tremendous desolation, without feeling the least comfort, with an affliction so great that the pain of it seems nothing else but a death prolonged and a continual martyrdom : whereupon with great reason it may be said, *that although there be many martyrs, yet there are few souls which follow Christ our Lord with peace and resignation in such torments.*

Then it was men that martyred them, and God comforted their souls ; but now it is God that afflicts and hides Himself, and the devils, like cruel executioners, have a thousand ways to torment the soul and body, the whole man being crucified within and without.

Thy sorrow will seem to thee insuperable, and thy afflictions past the power of comfort, and that heaven rains no more upon thee : thou wilt see thyself begirt with griefs and besieged with sorrows internal from the darkness of thy powers, from the weakness of discourses : strong temptations will afflict thee, painful distrusting and troublesome scruples ; nay, light and judgment will forsake thee.

All the creatures will give thee trouble ; spiritual counsils will bring thee pain ; the reading of books, how holy soever, will not comfort thee as it used to do : if they speak to thee of patience they will exceedingly trouble thee : the fear of losing God

through thy unthankfulness and want of returns will torment thee to the soul : if thou groanest and beggest help of God, thou wilt find, instead of comfort, inward reproof and disfavour ; like another Canaanitish woman, to whom He made no answer at first and then treated her as the creature He was speaking of.

And although at this time the Lord will not abandon thee, because it would be impossible to live one moment without His help, yet the succour will be so secret that thy soul will not know it nor be capable of hope and consolation ; nay, it will seem to be without remedy, suffering like condemned persons the pains of hell (*circumdederunt me dolores mortis, et pericula inferni inveniunt me* (Psalm 116), and it would change them as such with a violent death, which would be a great comfort ; but (like those) the end of those afflictions and bitternesses will seem impossible.

But if thou, O blessed soul, shouldst know how much thou art beloved and defended by that divine Lord in the midst of thy long torments, thou wouldst find them so sweet that it would be necessary that God should work a miracle to let thee live. Be constant, O happy soul, be constant and of good courage ; for however intolerable thou art to thyself, yet thou wilt be protected, enriched, and beloved by that greatest Good as

if He had nothing else to do than to lead thee to perfection by the highest steps of love ; and if thou dost not turn away, but perseverest constantly, without leaving off thy undertaking, know that thou offerest to God the most accepted sacrifice ; so that if this Lord were capable of pain, He would find no ease till He has completed this loving union with thy soul.

If from the chaos of nothing His omnipotence has produced so many *wonders*, what will He do in thy soul, created after His own *image* and *likeness*, if thou keepest constant, quiet, and resigned, with a true knowledge of thy nothingness? Happy soul, which, even when it is disturbed, afflicted, and disconsolate, keeps steady there within, without going forth to desire exterior comfort.

Afflict not thyself too much and with inquietude, because these sharp martyrdoms may continue ; persevere in humility, and go not out of thyself to seek aid, for all thy good consists in being silent, suffering, and holding patience with rest and resignation. There wilt thou find the divine strength to overcome so hard a warfare: He is within thee that fighteth for thee, and He is strength itself.

When thou shalt come to this painful state of fearful desolation, weeping and lamentation are

not forbidden thy soul, whilst in the upper part of it it keeps resigned. Who can bear the Lord's heavy hand without tears and lamentation ? That great champion Job, even he lamented ; so did Christ our Lord in his forsaking ; but their weepings were accompanied with resignation.

Afflict not thyself, though God do crucify thee and make trial of thy fidelity ; imitate the woman of Canaan, who, being rejected and injured, did importune and persevere, humbling herself and following Him though she were treated as she was. It is necessary to drink the cup and not go back. If the scales were taken from thine eyes, as they were from St. Paul's, thou wouldst see the necessity of suffering, and glory, as he did, esteeming more the being crucified than being an apostle.

Thy good luck consists not in enjoying, but in suffering with quiet and resignation. St. Teresa appeared after her death to a certain soul and told it *that she had only been rewarded for her pain, but had not received one drachm of reward for so many ecstasies and revelations and comforts that she had enjoyed in this world.*

Although this painful martyrdom of horrible desolation and passive purgation be so tremendous that with reason it hath gotten the name of hell amongst mystic divines (because it seems impos-

sible to be able to live a moment with so grievous a torment, so that with great reason it may be said *that he that suffers it lives dying, and dying lives a lingering death*) ; yet know that it is necessary to endure it to arrive at the sweet, joyous and abundant riches of high contemplation and loving union ; and there has been no holy soul which has not passed through this spiritual martyrdom and painful torment : St. Gregory, the Pope, in the two last months of his life ; St. Francis of Assize, two years and a half ; St. Mary Maudlin of Pazzi, five years ; St. Rose of Pern, fifteen years ; and after such miracles as made the world amazed, St. Dominick suffered it even till half an hour of his happy exit.

CHAPTER VI.

THE other more profitable and meritorious martyrdom in souls already advanced in perfection and deep contemplation is a fire of Divine love which burns the soul and makes it painful with the same love. Sometimes the absence of its beloved afflicts it ; sometimes the sweet, ardent, and welcome weight of the loving and Divine Presence torments it. This sweet martyrdom always makes it sigh : some-

times if it enjoys and has its Beloved, for the pleasure of having Him, so that it cannot contain itself ; other times if He does not manifest Himself through the ardent anxiety of seeking, finding, and enjoying Him. All this is panting, suffering, and dying for love.

Oh, that thou couldst but come to conceive the contrariety of accidents that an enamoured soul suffers ! The combat so terrible and strong on one side, so sweet and melting and amiable on the other ! The martyrdom so piercing and sharp with which love torments it, and the cross so painful and sweet withal, without ever being in the mind of getting free from it whilst thou livest !

Just so much as light and love increase, just so much increases the grief in seeing that Good absent, which it loves so well. To feel it near itself is enjoyment ; and never to have done knowing and possessing it consumes its life. It has food and drink near its mouth, whilst it wants either, and cannot be satisfied ; it sees itself swallowed up and drowned in a sea of love, whilst the powerful hand that is able to save it is near it, and yet doth not do it ; nor doth it know when He will come whom it so much does desire.

Sometimes it hears the inward voice of its Beloved, which courts and calls it, and a soft and

delicate whisper which goes forth from the secret of the soul where it abides, which pierces it strongly, even like to melt and dissolve it, in seeing how near it hath Him within itself, and yet how far off from it, whilst it cannot come to possess Him. This intoxicates it, embases it, scares it, and fills it with unsatisfiability; and therefore love is said to be as strong as death, whilst it kills just as that doth.

CHAPTER VII.

Inward mortification and perfect resignation are necessary for obtaining internal peace.

THE most subtle arrow that is shot at us from nature is to induce us to that which is unlawful, with a pretence that it may be necessary and useful. Oh, how many souls have suffered themselves to be led away, and have lost the spirit by this gilded cheat! Thou wilt never taste the delicious manna—*quod nemo novit, nisi qui accipit* (Apoc. ch. 2)—unless thou dost perfectly overcome thyself, even to die in thyself, because he who endeavours not to die to his passions is not well disposed to receive the gift of understanding, without the infusion whereof it is impossible for him to go into himself and be changed

in his spirit ; and therefore those that keep without have nothing of it.

Never disquiet thyself for any accident ; for inquietude is the door by which the enemy gets into the soul to rob it of its peace.

Resign and deny thyself wholly ; for though true self-denial is harsh at the beginning, it is easy in the middle, and becomes most sweet in the end.

Thou wilt find thyself far from *perfection* if thou dost not find God in everything.

Know that pure, perfect, and essential love consists in the *cross*, in *self-denial* and *resignation*, in *perfect humility*, in *poverty of spirit*, and in a *mean opinion* of thyself.

In the time of strong temptation, desertion, and desolation it is necessary for thee to get close into thy centre, that thou mayest only look at and contemplate God, who keeps His Throne and His abode in the bottom of thy soul.

Thou wilt find impatience and bitterness of heart to grow from the depth of sensible, emptied, and mortified love.

True love is known, with its effects, when the soul is profoundly humbled, and desires to be truly mortified and disposed.

Many there be, who, however they have been dedicated to prayer, yet have no relish of God ;

because in the end of their prayers, they are neither mortified, nor attend upon God any longer. For obtaining that peaceable and continual attending, it is necessary to get a great purity of mind and heart, great peace of soul, and an universal resignation.

To the simple and the mortified the recreation of the senses is a sort of death : they never go to it, unless compelled by necessity and edification of their neighbours.

The bottom of our soul, you will know, is the place of our happiness. There the Lord shows us wonders. There we engulf and lose ourselves in the immense ocean of His infinite goodness, in which we keep fixed and unmoveable. There resides the incomparable fruition of our soul, and that eminent and sweet rest of it. An humble and resigned soul, which is come to this bottom, seeks no more than merely to please God, and the holy and loving spirit teaches it everything with His sweet and enlivening unction.

Amongst the saints there are some gigantic ones, who continually suffer, with patience, indispositions of body, of whom God takes great care. But high and sovereign is their gift who, by the strength of the Holy Ghost, suffer both internal and external crosses with content and resignation. This is that sort of holiness so much the more

rare as it is more precious in the sight of God. The spiritual ones who walk this way are rare : because they are few in the world who do totally deny themselves, to follow Christ crucified, with simpleness and bareness of spirit, through the lonesome and thorny ways of the cross, without making reflections upon themselves.

A life of self-denial is above all the miracles of the saints ; and it doth not know whether it be alive or dead, lost or gained, whether it agrees or resists. This is the true resigned life. But although it should be a long time before thou comest to this state, and thou shouldst think not to have made one step towards it, yet affright not thyself at this, for God uses to bestow upon a soul that blessing in one moment which was denied it for many years before.

He that desires to suffer blindfold, without the comfort of God or the creatures, is gotten too far onwards to be able to resist unjust accusations which his enemies make against him, even in the most dreadful and interior desolation.

The spiritual man that lives by God, and in Him, is inwardly contented in the midst of his adversities, because the cross and affliction are his life and delight.

Tribulation is a great treasure, wherewith God

honours those that be His in this life. Therefore evil men are necessary for those that are good ; and so are the devils themselves, which, by afflicting us, do try to ruin us ; but instead of doing us harm, they do us the greatest good imaginable.

There must be tribulation to make a man's life acceptable unto God ; without it it is like the body without the soul, the soul without grace, the earth without the sun.

With the wind of tribulation God separates, in the floor of the soul, the chaff from the corn.

When God crucifies in the inmost part of the soul, no creature is able to comfort it ; nay, comforts are but grievous and bitter crosses to it. And if it be well instructed in the laws and discipline of the ways of pure love, in the time of great desolation and inward troubles, it ought not to seek abroad among the creatures for comfort, nor lament itself with them, nor will it be able to read spiritual books, because this is a secret way of getting at a distance from suffering.

Those saints are to be pitied who cannot find in their hearts to believe that tribulation and suffering are their greatest blessing. They who are perfect ought always to be desirous of dying and suffering, being always in a state of death and suffering. Vain is the man who doth not

suffer, because he is born to toil and suffer ; but much more the friends and elect of God.

Undeceive thyself, and believe that, in order to thy soul's being totally transformed with God, it is necessary for it to be lost, and be denied in its life, sense, knowledge, and power ; and to die living, and not living ; dying, and not dying ; suffering, and not suffering ; resigning up, and not resigning up itself ; without reflecting upon anything.

Perfection, in its followers, receives not its glories but by fire and martyrdom, griefs, torments, punishment, and contempt, suffered and endured with gallantry and courage ; and he that would have some place to set his feet on, and rest himself, and does not go beyond the reason of reason and of sense, will never get into the secret cabinet of knowledge, though by reading he may chance to get a taste, and relish the understanding of it.

CHAPTER VIII.

Pursues the same matter.

YOU must know that the Lord will not manifest Himself in thy soul, till it be denied in itself, and dead in its senses and powers. Nor will it ever come to this state, till, being perfectly

resigned, it resolves to be with God all alone ; making an equal account of gifts and contempts, light and darkness, peace and war. In sum, that the soul may arrive at perfect quietness, and supreme and internal peace, it ought first to die in itself, and live only in God, and for Him ; and the more dead it shall be in itself, the more shall it know God. But if it doth not mind this continual denying of itself, and internal mortification, it will never arrive at this state, nor preserve God within it ; and then it will be continually subject to accidents and passions of the mind, such as are judging, murmuring, resenting, excusing, defending, to keep its honour and reputation, which are enemies to perfection, peace, and the spirit.

Know that the diversities of states amongst those that be spiritual consist only in not dying all alike ; but in the happy, who die continually, God hath His honour, His blessings, and delights here below.

Great is the difference which is between doing, suffering, and dying. Doing is delightful and belongs to beginners ; suffering, with desire, belongs to those who are proficient ; dying always in themselves belongs to those who are accomplished and perfect, of which number there are very few in the world.

How happy wilt thou be if thou hast no other thought but to die in thyself? Thou wilt then become not only victorious over thine enemies, but over thyself; in which victory thou wilt certainly find pure love, perfect peace, and divine wisdom.

It is impossible for a man to be able to think and live mystically in a simple understanding of the divine and infused wisdom, if he does not first die in himself by the total denying of sense and the reasonable appetite.

The true lesson of the spiritual man, and that which thou oughtest to learn, is to leave all things in their place, and not meddle with any but what thy office may bind thee to; because the soul which leaves everything to find God doth then begin to have all in the eternity it seeks.

Some souls there are who seek repose; others without seeking have the pleasure of it; others have a pleasure in pain, and others seek it. The first do as good as nothing, the second are in a way towards it, the third run, and the last flee.

The disesteem of delights, and the counting of them torment, is the property of a truly mortified man.

Enjoyment and internal peace are the fruits of the Spirit Divine; and no man gets them into

his possession if in the closet of his soul he is not a resigned man.

Thou seest that the displeasures of the good pass presently away ; but for all that endeavour never to have them, nor to stop in them ; for they damnify thy health, disturb thy reason, and disquiet thy spirit.

Amongst other holy councils which thou must observe, remember well this that follows :—Look not upon other men's faults, but thine own ; keep silence with a continual internal conversation ; mortify thyself in all things, and at all hours, and by this means thou wilt get free from many imperfections, and make thyself commander of great virtues.

Mortify thyself in not judging ill of anybody at any time ; because the suspicion of thy neighbours disturbs the purity of heart, discomposes it, brings the soul out, and takes away its repose.

Never wilt thou have perfect resignation if thou mindest human respects, and reflectest upon the little idol of what people say. The soul that goes by the inward way will soon lose itself, if once it come to look at reason amongst the creatures, and in commerce and conversation with them. There is no other reason than not to look at reason, but to imagine that God permits

grievances to fall on us, to humble and annihilate us and make us live wholly resigned.

Behold how God makes greater account of a soul that lives internally resigned than of another that doth miracles, even to the raising of the dead.

Many souls there are, which, though they exercise prayer, yet, because they are not mortified, are always imperfect and full of self-love.

Hold it for a true maxim, that nobody can do a grievance or injury to a soul despised by itself, and one that is nothing in its own account.

Finally, be of hope, suffer, be silent, and patient : let nothing affright thee : all of it will have a time to end : God only is He that is unchangeable : patience brings a man in everything. He that hath God hath all things ; and he that hath Him not hath nothing.

CHAPTER IX.

For the obtaining of Internal Peace, it is necessary for the Soul to know his misery.

IF the soul should not fall into some faults, it would never come to understand its own misery, though it hears men speak, and reads spiritual books ; nor can it ever obtain precious

peace, if it do not first know its own miserable weakness ; because there the remedy is difficult, where there is no clear knowledge of the defect. God will suffer in thee sometimes one fault, sometimes another, that by this knowledge of thyself, seeing thee so often fallen, thou mayest believe that thou art a mere nothing, in which knowledge and belief, true peace and perfect humility is founded. And that thou mayest the better search into this mystery, and see what thou art, I will try to undeceive thee in some of thy manifold imperfections.

Thou art so quick and nice, that it may be if thou dost but trip as thou walkest, or findest thy way molested, thou feelest even hell itself. If thou art denied thy due, or thy pleasure opposed, thou presently briskest up with a warm resentment of it. If thou spiest a fault in thy neighbour, instead of pitying him and thinking that thou thyself art liable to the same failing, thou indiscreetly reprovest him ; if thou seest a thing convenient for thee, and canst not compass it, thou growest sad and full of sorrow ; if thou receivest a slight injury from thy neighbour, thou chidest at him, and complainest for it, inso-much, that for any trifle thou art inwardly and outwardly discomposed, and locest thyself.

Thou wouldst be patient, but with another's

patience ; and if the impatience still continues, thou layest the fault with much pains upon thy companion, without considering that thou art intolerable to thyself ; and when the rancour is over, thou cunningly dost return to make thyself virtuous, giving documents and relating spiritual sayings with artifice of wit, without mending thy past faults. Although thou willingly dost condemn thyself, reproving thy faults before others, yet this thou dost more to justify thyself with him that sees thy faults, that thou mayest return again afresh to the former esteem of thyself, than through any effect of perfect humility.

Other times thou dost subtly allege that it is not through fault but zeal of justice that thou complainest of thy neighbour. Thou believest for the most part that thou art virtuous, constant, and courageous, even to the giving up of thy life into the tyrant's hand, solely for the sake of Divine love ; yet thou canst scarce hear the least word of anger, but presently thou dost afflict and trouble and disquiet thyself. These are all industrious engines of self-love, and the secret pride of thy soul. Know therefore that self-love reigns in thee, and from the purchasing this precious peace, that is thy greatest hindrance.

CHAPTER X.

In which is shown and discovered what is the false humility, and what the true ; with the effects of them.

THOU must know that there are two sorts of humility—one false and counterfeit, the other true. The false one is theirs who, like water, which must mount upward, receive an external fall, and artificial submission, to rise up again immediately. These avoid esteem and honour, that so they may be taken to be humble. They say of themselves that they are very evil that they may be thought good ; and though they know their own misery, yet they are loth that other folks should know it. This is dissembled humility, and feigned, and nothing but secret pride.

Theirs is the true humility who have gotten a perfect habit of it ; these never think of it, but judge humbly of themselves ; they do things with courage and patience ; they live and die in God ; they mind not themselves nor the creatures ; they are constant and quiet in all things ; they suffer molestation with joy, desiring more of it, that they may imitate their dear and despised Jesus ; they covet to be reputed trifles and sport

by the world ; they are contented with what God allots them, and are convinced of their faults with a pleasing shame ; they are not humbled by the counsel of reason, but by the affection of the will ; there is no honour that they look after, nor injury to disturb them, no trouble to vex them, no prosperity to make them proud, because they are always immoveable in their nothing and in themselves with absolute peace.

And that thou mayest be acquainted with interior and true humility, know that it doth not consist in external acts, in taking the lowest place, in going poor in clothes, in speaking submissively, in shutting the eyes, in affectionate sighings, nor in condemning thy ways, calling thyself miserable, to give others to understand that thou art humble. It consists only in the contempt of thyself and the desire to be despised, with a low and profound knowledge, without concerning thyself whether thou art esteemed humble or not, though an angel should reveal such a thing to thee.

The torment of light, wherewith the Lord with His graces enlightens the soul, doth two things ; it discovers the greatness of God, and at the same time the soul knows its own stench and misery, insomuch that no tongue is able to express the depth in which it is overwhelmed, being de-

sirous that every one should know its humility ; and it is so far from vainglory and complacency, as it sees that grace of God to be the mere goodness of Him, and nothing but His mercy, which is pleased to take pity on it.

Thou shalt never be hurt by men or devil, but by thyself, thy own proper pride, and the violence of thy passions. Take heed of thyself, for thou, of thyself, art the greatest devil of all to thyself.

Have no mind to be esteemed, when God incarnate was called fool, drunkard, and said to have a devil. Oh, the folly of Christians ! That we should be willing to enjoy happiness, without being willing to imitate Him on the cross, in reproaches, humility, poverty, and in other virtues !

The truly humbled man is at rest and ease in his heart ; there he stands the trial of God and men, and the devil himself, above all reason and discretion, possessing himself in peace and quietness ; looking for, with all humility, the pure pleasure of God, as well in life as death. Things without do no more disquiet him than if they never were. The cross to him, and even death itself, are delights, though he make no such show outwardly. But oh, whom do we speak of ? For few there are of these sort of humble men in the whole world.

Hope thou, and desire, and suffer, and die without anybody's knowing it; for herein consists the humble and perfect love. Oh, how much peace wilt thou find in thy soul if thou dost profoundly humble thyself, and even hug contempt!

Thou wilt never be perfectly humble, though thou knowest thy own misery, unless thou desirest all men should know it; then thou wilt avoid praises, embrace injuries, despise everything that makes a fair show, even to thine own self; and if any tribulation come upon thee, blame none for it, but judge that it comes from God's hand, as the giver of every good.

If thou wouldst bear thy neighbour's faults, cast thine eye upon thine own; and if thou thinkest to thyself that thou hast made any progress in perfection by thyself, know that thou art not humble at all, nor hast yet made one step in the way of the spirit.

The degrees of humility are the qualities of a body in the grave; that is, to be in the lowest place, buried like one that's dead, to stink, and be corrupted to itself, to be dust, and nothing in one's own account. Finally, if thou wouldst be blessed, learn to despise thyself, and to be despised by others.

CHAPTER XI.

Maxims, to know a simple, humble, and true heart.

ENCOURAGE thyself to be humble, embracing tribulations as instruments of thy good ; rejoice in contempt, and desire that God may be thy holy refuge, comfort, and protector.

None, let him be never so great in this world, can be greater than he that is in the eye and favour of God ; and therefore the truly humble man despises whatever there is in the world, even to himself, and puts his only trust and repose in God.

The truly humble man suffers quietly and patiently internal troubles ; and he is the man that makes great way in a little time, like one that sails before the wind.

The truly humble man finds God in all things ; so that whatever contempt, injury, or affronts come to him by means of the creatures, he receives it with great peace and quiet internal, as sent from the Divine hand, and loves greatly the instrument with which the Lord tries him.

He is not yet arrived at profound humility, that is taken with praise, though he does not desire it, nor seek it, but rather avoids it ; be-

cause, to an humble heart, praises are bitter crosses, although it be wholly quiet and immovable.

He has no internal humility who doth not abhor himself, with a mortal, but withal a peaceable and quiet hatred ; but he will never come to possess this treasure that has not a low and profound knowledge of his own vileness, rottenness, and misery.

He that is upon excuses and replies has not a simple and humble heart, especially if he does this with his superiors ; because replies grow from a secret pride that reigns in the soul, and from thence proceeds the total ruin of it.

Perfidiousness supposes little submission, and this less humility ; and both together they are the fuel of inquietness, discord, and disturbance.

The humble heart is not disquieted by imperfections, though these do grieve it to the soul ; because they are against its loving Lord. Nor is he concerned that he cannot do great things ; for he always stands in his own nothingness and misery ; nay, he wonders at himself that he can do anything of virtue, and presently thanks the Lord for it, with a true knowledge that it is God that doth all, and remains dissatisfied with what he does himself.

The truly humble man, though he sees all, yet

he looks upon nothing to judge it, because he judges ill only of himself.

The truly humble man doth always find an excuse to defend him that mortifies him, at least in a sound intention. Who therefore would be angry with a man of good intention ?

So much (nay more) doth false humility displease God, as true pride does ; because that is hypocrisy besides.

The truly humble man, though everything falls out contrary to him, is neither disquieted nor afflicted by it ; because he is prepared, and thinks he deserves no less. He is not disquieted under troublesome thoughts, wherewith the devil seeks to torment him, nor under temptations, tribulations, and desertions ; but rather acknowledges his unworthiness, and is affected that the Lord chastises him by the devil's means, though he be a vile instrument ; all he suffers seems nothing to him, and he never doth a thing that he thinks worth any great matter.

He that is arrived at perfect and inward humility, although he be disturbed at nothing, as one that abhors himself, because he knows his imperfection in everything, his ingratitude and his misery, yet he suffers a great cross in enduring himself. This is the sign to know true humility of heart by. But the happy soul, which is gotten

to this holy hatred of itself, lives overwhelmed, drowned, and swallowed up in the depths of its own nothingness, out of which the Lord raises him, by communicating Divine wisdom to him, and filling him with light, peace, tranquillity, and love.

CHAPTER XII.

Inward solitude is that which chiefly brings a man to the purchase of internal peace.

K NOW, that although exterior solitude doth much assist for the obtaining internal peace, yet the Lord did not mean this, when He spake by His prophet (Hos. ii. 14)—*I will bring her into solitude, and speak privately to her*; but He meant the interior solitude, which jointly conduces to the obtaining the *precious jewel* of peace internal. Internal solitude consists in the forgetting of the creatures, in disengaging one's self from them, in a perfect nakedness of all the affections, desires, thoughts, and one's own will. This is the true solitude, where the soul reposes with a sweet and inward serenity in the arms of its chiefest good.

Oh, what infinite room is there in a soul that is arrived at this Divine solitude! Oh, what inward, what retired, what secret, what spacious, what vast distances are there within a happy soul that

is once come to be truly solitary ! There the Lord converses and communicates Himself inwardly with the soul ; there He fills it with Himself, because it is empty ; clothes it with light and with His love, because it is naked ; lifts it up, because it is low ; and unites it with Himself, and transforms it, because it is alone.

O delightful solitude and cipher of eternal blessings ! O mirror, in which the Eternal Father is always beheld ! There is great reason to call thee solitude ; for thou art so much alone that there is scarce a soul that looks after thee, that loves and knows thee. O Divine Lord ! How is it that souls do not go from earth to this glory ! How come they to lose so great a good, through the only love and desire of created things ! Blessed soul, how happy wilt thou be, if thou dost but leave all for God ! Seek Him only, breathe after none but Him ; let Him only have thy sighs. Desire nothing, and then nothing can trouble thee ; and if thou dost desire any good, how spiritual soever it be, let it be in such a manner that thou mayest not be disquieted if thou miss it.

If, with this liberty, thou wilt give thy soul to God, taken off from the world, free and alone, thou wilt be the happiest creature upon earth, because the Most High has His secret habitation in this holy solitude. In this desert and paradise

is enjoyed the conversation of God ; and it is only in this internal retirement that that marvellous, powerful, and Divine voice is heard.

If thou wouldst enter into this heaven of earth, forget every care and every thought : get out of thyself, that the love of God may live in thy soul.

Live as much as ever thou canst abstracted from the creatures, dedicate thyself wholly to thy Creator, and offer thyself in sacrifice with peace and quietness of spirit. Know that the more the soul disrobes itself, the more way it makes into this interior solitude, and becomes clothed with God ; and the more lonesome and empty of itself the soul gets to be, the more the Divine Spirit fills it.

There is not a more blessed life than a solitary one ; because in this happy life God gives Himself all to the creature and the creature all to God, by an intimate and sweet union and love. Oh, how few are there that come to relish this true *solitude* !

To make the soul truly solitary, it ought to forget all the creatures, and even itself ; otherwise it will never be able to make any near approach to God. Many men leave and forsake all things, but they do not leave their own liking, their own will, and themselves ; and therefore these truly solitary ones are so few. Wherefore, if the soul

does not get off from its own appetite and desire, from its own will, from spiritual gifts, and from repose even in the spirit itself, it never can arrive at this high felicity of internal solitude.

Go on, blessed soul ! Go on, without stop, towards this blessedness of internal solitude. See how God calls thee to enter into thy inward centre, where He will renew thee, change thee, fill thee, clothe thee, and show thee a new and heavenly kingdom, full of joy, peace, content, and serenity.

CHAPTER XIII.

In which is shown what infused and passive contemplation is, and its wonderful effects.

YOU must know that when once the soul is habituated to internal recollection and acquired contemplation that we have spoken of ; when once it is mortified, and desires wholly to be denied its appetites ; when once it efficaciously embraces internal and external mortification, and is willing to die heartily to its passions and its own ways, 'then God uses to take it alone by itself, and raise it more than it knows to a complete repose, where He sweetly and inwardly infuses in it His light, His love, and His strength,

enkindling and inflaming it with a true disposition to all manner of virtue.

There the Divine spouse, suspending its powers, puts it to sleep in a most sweet and pleasant rest ; there it sleeps, and quietly receives and enjoys (without knowing it) what it enjoys, with a most lovely and charming calm. There the soul, raised and lifted up to this passive state, becomes united to its greatest good, without costing it any trouble or pains for this union. There, in that supreme region and sacred temple of the soul, that greatest good takes its complacency, manifests itself, and creates a relish from the creature in a way above sense and all human understanding. There also only the pure Spirit, who is God (the purity of the soul being incapable of sensible things), rules it, and gets the mastership of it, communicating to it its illustrations and those sentiments which are necessary for the most pure and perfect union.

The soul, coming to itself again from these sweet and Divine embracings, becomes rich in light and love, and a mighty esteem of the Divine greatness, and the knowledge of its own misery, finding itself all changed divinely, and disposed to embrace, suffer, and to practise perfect *virtue*.

A simple, pure, infused, and perfect contemplation therefore is a known and inward manifesta-

tion which God gives of Himself, of His goodness, of His peace, of His sweetness, whose object is God, pure, unspeakable, abstracted from all particular thoughts, within an inward silence. But it is God delightful, God that draws us, God that sweetly raises us in a spiritual and most pure manner; an admirable gift which the Divine Majesty bestows to whom He will, as He will, and when He will, and for what time He will, though the state of this life be rather a state of the cross, of patience, of humility, and of suffering, than of enjoying.

Never wilt thou enjoy this Divine nectar till thou art advanced in virtue and inward mortifications, till thou dost heartily endeavour to fix in thy soul a great peace, silence, forgetfulness, and internal solitude. How is it possible to hear the sweet, inward, and powerful voice of God in the midst of the noise and tumults of the creatures? And how can the pure spirit be heard in the midst of considerations and discourses of artifice? If the soul will not continually die in itself, denying itself to all these materialities and satisfactions, the contemplation can be no more but a mere vanity, a vain complacency and presumption.

CHAPTER XIV.

Pursues the same Matter.

GOD doth not always communicate Himself with equal abundance in this sweetest and infused contemplation. Sometimes He grants this grace more than He doth at other times ; and sometimes He expects not that the soul should be so dead and denied, because this gift being His mere grace, He gives it when He pleases, and as He pleases ; so that no general rule can be made of it, nor any rate set to His Divine greatness ; nay, by means of this very contemplation He comes to deny it, to annihilate and die.

Sometimes the Lord gives greater light to the understanding, sometimes greater love to the will. There is no need here for the soul to take any pains or trouble ; it must receive what God gives it, and rest united, as He will have it : because His Majesty is Lord, and in the very time that He lays it asleep He possesses and fills it, and works in it powerfully and sweetly, without any industry or knowledge of its own ; insomuch that before ever it is aware of this so great mercy, it is gained, convinced, and changed already.

The soul which is in this happy state hath two things to avoid, the activity of human spirit

and interestedness. Our human spirit is unwilling to die in itself, but loveth to be doing and discoursing after its way, being in love with its own actions. A man had need to have a great fidelity, and, divesting himself of selfishness, to get a perfect and passive capacity of the Divine influences; the continual habits of operating freely which it has are a hindrance to its annihilation.

The second is interestedness in contemplation itself. Thou must therefore procure in thy soul a perfect divesting of all which is not God, without seeking any other end or interest, within or without, but the Divine will.

In a word, the manner that thou must use on thy part to fit thyself for this pure, passive, and perfect prayer is a total and absolute consignment of thyself into the hands of God, with a perfect submission to His most holy will, to be busied according to His pleasure and disposition, receiving what He ordains thee with an even and perfect resignation.

Thou must know that few be the souls which arrive at this infused and passive prayer; because few of them are capable of these Divine influences, with a total nakedness, and death of their own activity and power. Those only who feel it know it so, that this perfect nakedness is acquired

(by the help of God's grace) by a continual and inward mortification, dying to all its own inclinations and desires.

At no time must thou look at the effects which are wrought in thy soul, but especially herein ; because it would be a hindrance to the Divine operations which enrich it so to do ; all that thou hast to do is to pant after indifference, resignation, forgetfulness, and without thy being sensible of it, the greatest good will leave in thy soul a fit disposition for the practice of virtue, a true love of thy cross, of thy own contempt, of thy annihilation, and greater and stronger desires still of thy greater perfection, and the most pure and affective union.

CHAPTER XV.

Of the two means whereby the soul ascends up to infused contemplation, with the explication of what and how many the steps of it are.

THE means whereby the soul ascends to the felicity of contemplation and affective love are two—the pleasure and the desires of it. God uses at first to fill the soul with sensible pleasures, because it is so frail and miserable that without this preventive consolation it cannot take wing towards the fruition of heavenly things. In this

first step it is disposed by contrition, and is exercised in repentance, meditating upon the Redeemer's passion, rooting out diligently all worldly desires and vicious courses of life ; because the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the faint heart, the delicate, never conquer it, but those that use violence and force with themselves.

The second is the desires. The more the things of heaven are delighted in, the more they are desired ; and from thence there do ensue upon spiritual pleasures desires of enjoying heavenly and Divine blessings, and contempt of worldly ones. From these desires arises the inclination of following Christ our Lord, who said, *I am the way* (St. John xiv. 6). The steps of His imitation by which a man must go up are *charity, humility, meekness, patience, poverty, self-contempt, the cross, prayer, and mortification.*

The steps of infused contemplation are three. The *first* is *satiety*. When the soul is filled with God it conceives a hatred to all worldly things ; then it is quiet and satisfied only with Divine love. The *second* is *intoxication*. And this step is an excess of mind, and an elevation of soul arising from Divine love and satiety of it. The *third* is *security*. This step turns out all fear : The soul is so drenched with love Divine, and resigned up in such a manner to the Divine good

pleasure, that it would go willingly to hell, if it did but know it so to be the will of the Most High. In this step it feels such a certain bond of the Divine union, that it seems to it an impossible thing to be separated from its beloved and His infinite treasure.

There are six other steps of contemplation, which are these : *fire, union, elevation, illumination, pleasure, and repose*. With the first the soul is enkindled, and, being enkindled, is anointed ; being anointed, is raised ; being raised, contemplates ; contemplating, it receives pleasure ; and, receiving pleasure, it finds repose. By these steps the soul rises higher, being abstracted and experienced in the spiritual and internal way.

In the first step, which is fire, the soul is illustrated by the means of a Divine and ardent ray, enkindling the affections Divine, and drying up those which are but human. The second is the unction, which is a sweet and spiritual liquor, which, diffusing itself all the soul over, teaches it, strengthens it, and disposes it to receive and contemplate the Divine truth ; and sometimes it extends even to nature itself, corroborating it by patience, with a sensible pleasure that seems celestial.

The third is the elevation of the inner man over itself, that it may get fittest to the clear fountain of pure love. -

The fourth step, which is illumination, is an infused knowledge, whereby the soul contemplates sweetly the Divine truth, rising still from one clearness to another, from one light to another, from knowledge to knowledge, being guided by the spirit Divine.

The fifth is a savoury pleasure of the Divine sweetness, issuing forth from the plentiful and precious fountain of the Holy Ghost.

The sixth is a sweet and admirable tranquillity, arising from the conquest of fighting within and frequent prayer ; and this *very very* few have experience of. Here the abundance of joy and peace is so great that the soul seems to be in a sweet sleep, solacing and reposing itself in the Divine breast of love.

Many other steps of *contemplation* there are, as ecstasies, raptures, meltings, deliquiums, glee, kisses, embraces, exaltation, union, transformation, espousing, and matrimony, which I omit to explain, to give no occasion to speculation, and because there are whole books which treat of these points ; though they are all for him who finds nothing of them, any more than a blind man doth of colour, or a deaf man of music. In a word, by these steps we get up to the chamber and repose of the pacific king, and the true *Solomon*.

CHAPTER XVI.

Signs to know the inner man, and the mind that is purged.

THE signs to know the inner man by are four. The first, if the understanding produce no other thoughts than those which stir up to the light of faith ; and the will is so habituated that it begets no other acts of love than of God, and in order to Him. The second, if when he ceases from an external work, in which he was employed, the understanding and the will are presently and easily turned to God. The third, if, in entering upon prayer, he forgets all outward things, as if he had not seen nor used them. The fourth, if he carries himself orderly towards outward things, as if he were entering into the world again, fearing to embroil himself in business, and naturally abhorring it, unless when charity requires it of him.

Such a soul as this is free from the outward man, and easier enters into the interior solitude, where it sees none but God, and itself in Him, loving Him with quiet and peace and true love. There, in that secret centre, God is kindly speaking to it, teaching it a new kingdom, and true peace and joy.

This spiritual, abstracted, and retired soul hath its peace no more broken, though outwardly it may meet with combats; because through the infinite distance tempests do never reach to that serenest heaven within, where pure and perfect love resides; and though sometimes it may be naked, forsaken, fought against, and desolate, this is only the fury of the storm, which threatens and rages nowhere but without.

This secret love within hath four effects. The first is called *illumination*, which is a savoury and experimental knowledge of the greatness of God and of its own nothingness. The second is *inflammation*, which is an ardent desire of being burned, like the *salamander*, in this kind and Divine fire. The third is *sweetness*, which is a peaceable, joyful, sweet, and intimate fruition. The fourth is a swallowing up of the powers in God, by which immersion the soul is so much drenched and filled with God, that it cannot any longer seek, desire, or will anything but its greatest and infinite good.

From this fullest satiety two effects arise. The first is a great courage to suffer for God; the second is a certain hope or assurance that it can never lose Him, nor be separated from Him.

Here in this internal retirement the beloved Jesus hath His paradise, to whom we may go up, standing and conversing on the earth. And if

thou desirest to know who he is, who is altogether drawn to this inward retirement, with enlightened exemplification in God, I tell thee, it is he that in adversity, in discomfort of spirit, and in the want of necessities, stands firm and unshaken. These constant and inward souls are outwardly naked and wholly infused in God, whom they continually do contemplate ; they have no spot ; they live in God, and of Himself ; they shine brighter than a thousand suns ; they are beloved by the Son of God ; they are the darlings of God the Father, and elect spouses of the Holy Ghost.

By three signs is a mind that is purged to be known, as St. Thomas says in a treatise of his : The first sign is *diligence*, which is a strength of mind that banishes all neglect and sloth, that it may be disposed with earnestness and confidence to the pursuit of virtue. The second is *severity*, which likewise is a strength of mind against concupiscence, accompanied with an ardent love of roughness, vileness, and holy poverty. The third is benignity and sweetness of mind, which drive away all rancour, envy, aversion, and hatred against one's neighbour.

Till the mind be purged, the affection purified, the memory naked, the understanding brightened, the will denied and set afire, the soul can never arrive at the intimate and affective union with

God ; and therefore, because the spirit of God is purity itself, and light and rest, the soul (where He intends to make His abode) must have great purity, peace, attention, and quiet. Finally, the precious gift of a purged mind those only have who with continual diligence do seek, love, and retain it, and desire to be reputed the most vile in the world.

CHAPTER XVII.

Of Divine Wisdom.

DIVINE wisdom is an intellectual and infused knowledge of the Divine perfections and things eternal, which ought rather to be called *contemplation* than *speculation*. Science is acquired, and begets the knowledge of nature ; wisdom is infused, and begets the knowledge of the Divine goodness ; that desires to know what is not to be attained unto, without pain and sweat ; this desires not to know what it doth know, although it understands it all. In a word, the men who are scientific~~ally~~ entertain themselves in the knowledge of the things of the world ; and the wise lives swallowed up in God Himself.

Reason enlightened in the wise is a high and simple elevation of spirit, whereby he sees, with a clear and sharp sight, all that is inferior to him,

and what concerns his life and estate. This is that which renders the soul simple, illustrated, uniform, spiritual, and altogether introverted and abstracted from every created thing. This moves and draws away, with a sweet violence, the hearts of the humble and teachable, filling them with abundance of sweetness, peace, and pleasantness. Finally, the wise man says of it, that it brought him all good things at once: *Venerunt mihi omnia bona pariter cum illa* (Wisd. vii. 11).

You must know that the greatest part of men live by opinion, and judge according to the de-ceivableness of imagination and sense ; but the man who is wise judges of everything according to the real verity which is in it ; whose business is to understand, conceive, penetrate into, and transcend every created being, even to himself.

It is a great property in a wise man to do much and say little.

Wisdom is discovered in the works and words of the wise ; because he, being absolute master of all his passions, motions, and affections, is known in all his doings, like a quiet and still water, in which wisdom shines with clearness.

The understanding of mystical truths is secret and shut up from men, who are purely scholastical, unless they be humble ; because it is the science of saints, and none know it but those who heartily

love and seek their own contempt. Therefore the souls, who, by embracing this means, get to be purely mystical and truly humble, dive even to the profoundest apprehensions of the Divinity ; and the more sensually men do live, according to flesh and blood, the greater distance are they at from this mystical science.

Ordinarily it is seen that in the man who hath much scholastical and speculative knowledge Divine wisdom doth not predominate ; yet they make an admirable composition when they both meet together. The men of learning, who by God's mercy have attained to this mystic science, are worthy of veneration and praise in religion.

The external actions of the mystical and wise, which they do rather passively than actively, though they are a great torment to them, yet are ordered prudently by* them, by number, weight, and measure.

The sermons of men of learning who want the spirit, though they are made up of divers stories, elegant descriptions, acute discourses, and exquisite proofs, yet are by no means the word of God, but the word of men, platted over with false gold. These preachers spoil Christians, feeding them with wind and vanity ; and so they are, both of them, void of God.

These teachers feed their hearers with the wind

of hurtful subtleties, giving them stones instead of bread, leaves instead of fruit, and unsavoury earth mixed with poisoned honey instead of true food. These are they that hunt after honour, raising up an idol of reputation and applause, instead of seeking God's glory and the spiritual edification of men.

Those that preach with zeal and sincerity preach for God ; those that preach without them preach for themselves. Those that preach the word of God with spirit make it take impression in the heart; but those that preach it without spirit carry it no farther than to the ear.

Perfection doth not consist in teaching it, but in doing it ; because he is neither the greatest saint nor the wisest man that knows the truth most, but he that practises it.

It is a constant maxim that Divine wisdom begets humility ; and that which is acquired by the learned begets pride.

Holiness does not consist in forming deep and subtle conceits of the knowledge and attributes of God, but in the love of God and in self-denial. Therefore it is more frequently observed that holiness is more amongst the simple and humble than among the learned. How many poor old women are there in the world who have little or nothing of human science, but are rich in the love of

God ! How many divines do we see that are over head and ears in their vain wisdom, and yet very bare in things of true light and charity !

Remember that it is always good to speak like one that learns, and not like one that knows. Count it a greater honour to be reputed a mere ignoramus than a man of wisdom and prudence.

However, the learned, who are purely speculative, have some little sparks of spirit, yet these do not fly out from the simple bottom of eminent and Divine wisdom, which hath a mortal hatred to forms and species. The mixing of a little science is always a hindrance to the eternal, profound, pure, simple, and true wisdom.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Treating of the same.

THERE are two ways which lead to the knowledge of God, the one remote, the other near. The first is called *speculation*, the second *contemplation*. The learned, who follow scientific speculation by the sweetness of sensible discourses, get up to God by this means, as well as they can, that by this help they may be able to love Him ; but none of those who follow that way which they call *scholastical* ever arrives by that

only to the mystical way, or to the excellence of union, transformation, simplicity, light, peace, tranquillity, and love, as he doth who is brought by the Divine grace, by the mystical way of contemplation.

These men of learning, who are merely scholastical, don't know what the spirit is, nor what it is to be lost in God ; nor are they come yet to the taste of the sweet *ambrosia*, which is in the inmost depth and bottom of the soul, where it keeps its throne, and communicates itself with incredible, intimate, and delicious affluence. Nay, some there are who do even condemn this mystical science, because they neither do understand nor relish it.

The divine who doth not taste the sweetness of contemplation has no other reason to be given for it, but because he enters not by the gate which St. Paul points to, when he says, *Si quis inter vos videtur sapiens esse, stultus fiat ut sit sapiens* (1 Cor. iii. 18). If any one among you seem to himself to be wise, let him become a fool that he may be wise ; let him show his humility by reputed himself ignorant.

It is a general rule, and also a maxim in mystic theology, that the practice ought to be gotten before the theory ; that there ought to be some experimental exercise of supernatural contempla-

tion, before a search of the knowledge, and an inquiry after the full apprehension of it.

Although the mystical science does commonly belong to the humble and simple, yet, notwithstanding that, men of learning are not incapable of it, if they do not seek themselves, nor set any great value upon their own artificial knowledge ; but more, if they can forget it, as if they never had it, and only make use of it in its own proper place and time, for preaching and disputing when their turn comes, and afterwards give their minds to the simple and naked contemplation of God, without form, figure, or consideration.

The study, which is not ordered for God's glory only, is but a short way to hell ; not through the study, but the wind of pride, which begets it. Miserable is the greatest part of men at this time, whose only study is to satisfy the unsatisfiable curiosity of nature.

Many seek God, and find Him not ; because they are more moved by curiosity than sincere, pure, and upright intention. They rather desire spiritual comforts than God Himself ; and as they seek Him not with truth, they neither find God nor spiritual pleasures.

He that does not endeavour the total denying of himself will not be truly abstracted, and so can never be capable of the truth and the light of

the spirit. To go towards the mystical science, a man must never meddle with things which are without but with prudence, and in that which his office calls him to. Rare are the men who set a higher price upon hearing than speaking. But the wise and purely mystical man never speaks but when he cannot help it ; nor doth he concern himself in anything but what belongs to his office, and then he carries himself with great prudence.

The spirit of Divine wisdom fills men with sweetness, governs them with courage, and enlightens those with excellence who are subject to its direction. Where the Divine spirit dwells there is always simplicity and a holy liberty. But craft and double-mindedness, fiction, artifices, policy, and worldly respects are hell itself to wise and sincere men.

Know that he who would attain to the mystical science must be denied and taken off from five things. *First*, From the creatures. *Secondly*, From temporal things. *Thirdly*, From the very gifts of the Holy Ghost. *Fourthly*, From himself. *Fifthly*, He must be lost in God. This last is the completest of all ; because that soul only that knows how to be so taken off is that which attains to being lost in God, and only knows where to be in safety.

God is more satisfied with the affection of the heart than that of worldly science. It is one thing to cleanse the heart of all that which captivates and pollutes it, and another thing to do a thousand things, though good and holy, without minding that purity of heart, which is the main of all for attaining of Divine wisdom.

Never wilt thou get to this sovereign and Divine wisdom, if thou hast not strength, when God cleanseth thee in his own time, not only of thy adherences to temporal and natural blessings, but further, to supernatural and sublime ones, such as internal communications, ecstasies, raptures, and other gratuitous graces, whereon the soul rests and entertains itself.

Many souls come short of arriving to quiet contemplation, to Divine wisdom, and true knowledge, notwithstanding that they spend many hours in prayer and receive the Sacrament every day ; because they do not subject and submit themselves wholly and entirely to Him that hath light, nor deny and conquer themselves, nor give up themselves totally to God, with a perfect divesting and disinteresting of themselves ; in a word, till the soul be purified in the fire of inward pain, it will never get to a state of renovation, of transformation, of perfect contemplation, of Divine wisdom, and affective union.

CHAPTER XIX.

Of true and perfect annihilation.

THOU must know that all this fabric of annihilation hath its foundation but in two principles. The first is, To keep one's self and all worldly things in a low esteem and value ; from whence the putting in practice of this self-divesting, and of self-renunciation, and forsaking all created things, must have its rise, and that with affection and in deed.

The second principle must be a great esteem of God, to love, adore, and follow Him without the least interest of one's own, let it be never so holy. From these two principles still arise a full conformity to the Divine will. This powerful and practical conformity to the Divine will in all things leads the soul to annihilation and transformation with God, without the mixture of raptures, or external ecstasies, or vehement affections. This way being liable to many illusions, with the danger of weakness, and anguish of the understanding, by which path there is seldom any that gets up to the top of perfection, which is acquired by the other safe, firm, and real way, though not without a weighty cross ; because therein the highway of annihilation and perfection is founded,

which is seconded by many gifts of light, and Divine effects, and infinite other graces, *gratis datae*. Yet the soul that is annihilated must be unclothed of it all, if it would not have them be a hindrance to it in its way to deification.

As the soul makes continual progress from its own meanness, it ought to walk on to the practice of annihilation, which consists in the abhorring honour, dignity, and praise, there being no reason that dignity and honour should be given to vileness and a mere nothingness.

To the soul that is sensible of its own vileness, it appears an impossible thing to deserve anything; it is rather confounded, and knows itself unworthy of virtue and praise; it embraces with equal courage all occasions of contempt, persecution, infamy, shame, and affront, and as truly deserving of such reproaches; it renders the Lord thanks, when it lights upon such occasions, to be treated as it deserves; and knows itself also unworthy that He should use His justice upon it; but above all it is glad of contempt and affront, because its God gets great glory by it.

Such a soul as this always chooses the lowest, the vilest, and the most despised degree, as well of place as of clothing, and of all other things, without the least affectation of singularity; being of the opinion that the greatest vileness is beyond its

deserts, and acknowledging itself also unworthy even of this. This is the practice that brings the soul to a true annihilation of itself.

The soul that would be perfect begins to mortify its passions ; and when it is advanced in that exercise, it denies itself ; then, with the Divine aid, it passes to the state of nothingness, where it despises, abhors, and plunges itself upon the knowledge that it is nothing, that it can do nothing, and that it is worth nothing. From hence springs the dying in itself, and in its senses, in many ways, and at all hours ; and finally, from this spiritual death the true and perfect annihilation derives its original ; insomuch, that when the soul is once dead to its will and understanding, it is properly said to be arrived at the perfect and happy state of annihilation, which is the last disposition for transformation and union which the soul itself doth not understand, because it would not be annihilated if it should come to know it. And although it do get to this happy state of annihilation, yet it must know that it must walk still on, and must be further and further purified and annihilated.

You must know that this annihilation, to make it perfect in the soul, must be in a man's own judgment, in his will, in his works, inclinations, desires, thoughts, and in itself ; so that the soul

must find itself dead to its will, desire, endeavour, understanding, and thought ; willing, as if it did not will ; desiring, as if it did not desire ; understanding, as if it did not understand ; thinking, as if it did not think, without inclining to anything ; embracing equally contempts and honours, benefits and corrections. Oh, what a happy soul is that which is thus dead and annihilated ! It lives no longer in itself ; because God lives in it. And now it may most truly be said of it, that it is a renewed *phœnix*, because it is changed, spiritualised, transformed, and deified.

CHAPTER XX.

In which is shown how this nothing is the ready way to obtain purity of soul, perfect contemplation, and the rich treasure of peace internal.

THE way to attain that high state of a mind reformed, whereby a man immediately gets to the greatest good, to our first original, and to the highest peace, is his nothingness. Endeavour, O soul, to be always buried in that misery. This nothing, and this acknowledged misery, is the means whereby the Lord works wonders in thy soul. Clothe thyself with this nothing, and with this misery ; and see that this misery and this

nothing be thy continual food and habitation, even to the casting down thyself low therein, and then I assure thee that thou being in that manner, the nothing, the Lord will be the whole in thy soul.

Why, thinkest thou, do infinite souls hinder the abundant current of the Divine gifts? It is only because they would be doing something, and have a desire to be great ; all this is to come away from internal humility, and from their own nothing ; and therefore they prevent those wonders which that infinite goodness would work in them. They betake themselves to the very gifts of the spirit, and there they stick, that they may come out from the centre of nothing, and so the whole work is spoiled. They seek not God with truth, and therefore they find Him not ; for know thou must that there is no finding of Him, but in the undervaluing of our ourselves and in nothing.

We seek ourselves every time we get out of our nothing ; and therefore we never get to quiet and perfect contemplation. Creep in, as far as ever thou canst, into the truth of thy nothing, and then nothing will disquiet thee ; nay, thou wilt be humble and ashamed, losing openly thy own reputation and esteem.

Oh, what a strong bulwark wilt thou find of that

nothing ! Who can ever afflict thee if once thou dost retire into that fortress ? Because the soul which is despised by itself, and in its own knowledge, is nothing, is not capable of receiving grievance or injury from anybody. The soul which keeps within its nothingness is internally silent, lives resigned in any torment whatsoever, by thinking it less than what it doth deserve ; it shuns the suspicion of a neighbour, never looks at other people's faults, but its own ; is free from abundance of imperfections, and becomes commander of great virtue. Whilst the soul keeps still and quiet in its nothingness, it perfects it, it enriches it, the Lord draws His Own image and likeness in it, without anything to hinder it.

By the way of nothing thou must come to lose thyself in God (which is the last degree of perfection) and happy wilt thou be if thou canst so lose thyself ; then wilt thou get thyself gain, and find thyself most certainly. In this same shop of *nothing* simplicity is made ; interior and infused recollection is possessed, quiet is obtained, and the heart is cleansed from all manner of imperfection. Oh, what a treasure wilt thou find, if thou shalt once fix thy habitation in nothing ! And if thou once gettest but snug into the centre of nothing, thou wilt never concern thyself with anything that is without (the great, ugly, large

step that so many thousand souls do stumble at) unless it be as thy office may call thee to it.

If thou dost but get shut up in nothing (where the blows of adversity can never come) nothing will vex thee or break thy peace. This is the way of getting to the command of thyself, because perfect and true dominion do only govern in nothing ; with the helmet of nothing thou wilt be too hard for strong temptations, and the terrible suggestions of the envious enemy.

Knowing that thou art nothing, that thou canst do nothing, and art worth just nothing, thou wilt quietly embrace passive drynesses, thou wilt endure horrible desolations, thou wilt undergo spiritual martyrdoms and inward torments. By means of this nothing thou must die in thyself, many ways, at all times and all hours.

Who must awaken the soul out of that sweet and pleasant sleep, if once it comes to take a nap in nothing? This is the way that David got to perfect annihilation without so much as knowing it : *Ad nihilum redactus sum et nescivi* (Psalm 17). Keeping thyself in nothing, thou wilt bar the door against everything that is not of God ; thou wilt retire also from thine ownself, and walk towards that internal solitude, where the Divine Spouse speaks in the heart of His Bride, teaching her high and Divine wisdom. Drown

thyself in this nothing, and there shalt thou find a holy sanctuary against any tempest whatsoever.

By this way must thou return to the happy state of innocency forfeited by our first parents. By this gate thou must enter into the happy land of the living, where thou wilt find the greatest good, the breadth of charity, the beauty of righteousness, the straight line of equity and justice, and, in sum, every jot and tittle of perfection. Lastly, do not look at *nothing*, desire *nothing*, will *nothing*, nor endeavour *nothing* ; and then, in *everything*, thy soul will live reposed with quiet and enjoyment.

This, this is the way to get purity of soul, perfect contemplation, and peace internal. Walk therefore in this safe path, and endeavour to overwhelm thyself in this *nothing*, endeavour to lose thyself, to sink deep into it, if thou hast a mind to be annihilated, united, and transformed.

CHAPTER XXI.

Of the high felicity of internal peace, and the wonderful effects of it.

THE soul, being once annihilated and renewed with perfect nakedness, finds in its superior part a profound peace and a sweet rest, which

brings it to such a perfect union of love that it is joyful all over. And such a soul as this is already arrived to such a happiness, that it neither wills nor desires anything but what its beloved wills ; it conforms itself to this will in all emergencies, as well in comfort as anguish, and rejoices also in everything to do the Divine good pleasure.

There is nothing but what comforts it, nor doth it want anything but what it can well want. To die is enjoyment to it, and to live is its joy. It is as contented here upon earth as it can be in paradise ; it is as glad under privation as it can be in possession ; in sickness as it can be in health ; because it knows that this is the will of its Lord. This is its *life*, this its *glory*, its *paradise*, its *peace*, its *repose*, its *rest*, its *consolation*, and *highest happiness*.

If it were necessary to such a soul as this, which is gotten up by the step of annihilation to the region of peace, to make its choice, it would choose desolation before comfort, contempt before honour, because the loving Jesus made great esteem of reproach and pain ; if it first endured the hunger of the blessings of heaven, if it thirsted for God, if it had the fear of losing Him, the lamentation of heart and the fighting of the devil : now things are altered, and hunger is turned into satisfying, the thirst into satiety, the fear

into assurance, the sadness into joy, the weeping into merriment, and the fierce fighting into the greatest peace. O happy soul, that enjoys here on earth so great a felicity ! Thou must know that these kind of souls (though few they are) be the strong pillars which support the Church, and such as abate the Divine indignation.

And now this soul that is entered into the heaven of peace acknowledges itself full of God and His supernatural gifts; because it lives grounded in a pure love, receiving equal pleasure in light and darkness, in night and day, in affliction and consolation. Through this holy and heavenly indifference it never loses its peace in adversity, nor its tranquillity in tribulation, but sees itself full of unspeakable enjoyments.

And although the prince of darkness makes all the assaults of hell against it, with horrible temptations, yet it makes head against them, and stands like a strong pillar ; no more happening to it by them than happens to a high mountain and a deep valley in the time of storm and tempest.

The valley is darkened with thick clouds, fierce tempests of hail, thunder, lightning, and hailstones, which looks like the picture of hell ; at the same time the lofty mountain glitters, by the bright beams of the sun, in quietness and serenity,

continuing clear like heaven, immovable, and full of light.

The same happens to this blessed soul ; the valley of the part below is suffering tribulations, combats, darkness, desolations, torments, martyrdoms and suggestions ; and at the same time, on the lofty mountain of the higher part of the soul, the true sun casts its beams ; it enflames and enlightens it, and so it becomes clear, peaceable, resplendent, quiet, serene, being a mere ocean of joy.

So great therefore is the quiet of this pure soul, which is gotten up the mountain of tranquillity, so great is the peace of its spirit, so great the serenity and cheerfulness that is within, that a remnant and glimmering of God does redound even to the outside of it.

Because in the throne of quiet are manifest the perfections of spiritual beauty ; here the true light of the secret and Divine mysteries of our holy faith, here perfect humility, even to the annihilation of itself, the amplest resignation, chastity, poverty of spirit, the sincerity and innocence of the dove, external modesty, silence, and internal solitude, liberty, and purity of heart ; here the forgetfulness of every created thing, even of itself, joyful simplicity, heavenly indifference, continual prayer, a total nakedness, perfect disinterestedness,

a most wise contemplation, a conversation of heaven ; and lastly, the most perfect and serene peace within, of which this happy soul may say what the wise man said of wisdom, that all other graces came alone in company with her : *venerunt mihi omnia bona paritur cum illa* (Wisd. vii. 11).

This is the rich and hidden treasure ; this is the lost groat of the gospel ; this is the blessed life, the happy life, the true life, and the blessedness here below. O thou lovely greatness, that passest the knowledge of the sons of men ! O excellent supernatural life, how admirable and unspeakable art thou, for thou art the very draught of blessedness ! Oh, how much dost thou raise a soul from earth, which loses in its view all things of the vileness of earth ! Thou art poor to look upon, but inwardly thou art full of wealth ; thou seemest low, but art exceeding high ; in a word, thou art that which maketh men live a life divine here below. Give me, O Lord, thou Greatest Goodness, give me a good portion of this heavenly happiness and true peace, that the world, sensual as it is, is neither capable of understanding nor receiving. *Quem mundus non potest accipere.*

CHAPTER XXII.

A mournful exclamation and lamentable moan to God for the small company of souls that arrive at perfection, the loving union, and the Divine transformation.

O DIVINE Majesty, in whose presence the pillars of heaven do quake and tremble ! O thou Goodness, more than infinite, in whose love the seraphim burn ! Give me leave, O Lord, to lament our blindness and ingratitude. We all live in mistakes, seeking the foolish world, and forsaking Thee, who art our God : we all forsake Thee, the fountain of living waters, for the stinking dirt of the world.

O we children of men ! how long shall we follow after lying and vanity ? Who is it that hath thus deceived us, that we should forsake God, our greatest good ? Who is it that speaks the most truth to us ? Who is it that loves us most ? Who defends us most ? Who is it that doth more to show Himself a friend ? Who more tender to show Himself a spouse, and more good to be a father ; that our blindness should be so great, that we should all forsake this greatest and infinite goodness.

O Divine Lord, what a few souls are there in

the world which do serve Thee with perfection ! How small is the number of those who are willing to suffer that they may follow Christ crucified, that they may embrace the cross, that they may deny and condemn themselves ! Oh, what a scarcity of souls are there which are disinterested and totally naked ! How few are those souls which are dead to themselves and alive to God, which are totally resigned to His Divine good pleasure ! How few those who are adorned with simple obedience, profound knowledge of themselves, and true humility ! How few those who, with an entire indifference, give up themselves into the hands of God, to do what He pleases with them ! How few are there of those pure souls which be of a simple and disinterested heart, and which, putting off their own understanding, knowledge, desire, and will, do long for self-denial and spiritual death ! Oh, what a scarcity of souls is there which are willing to let the Divine Creator work in them a mind to suffer that they may not suffer, and to die that they may not die ! How few are the souls which are willing to forget themselves, to free their hearts from their own affections, their own desires, their own satisfactions, their own love and judgments ! that are willing to be led by the highway of self-denial and the internal way ! that are willing to be annihilated, dying to themselves and their senses ! that are willing to let themselves be

emptied, purified, and unclothed, that God may fill and clothe and perfect them ! In a word, how small, O Lord, is the number of those souls which are blind, deaf, and dumb, and perfectly contemplative !

Oh, the shame of us, the children of Adam, who, for a thing of mere vileness, do despise true felicity and hinder our greatest good, the rich treasure, and infinite goodness ! Great reason has Heaven to lament that there are so few souls to follow its precious pathway. Viæ Sionis lugent, quod non sint qui veniant ad solemnitatem (Lam. i. 4).



The Substance of several Letters sent from Italy concerning the Quietists.

IN the year 1675, this book was first published, with five approbations before it. One was by the Archbishop of Rheggio ; another was by the General of the Franciscans, who was likewise one of the Qualificators of the Inquisition ; another was by Father Martin de Esparsa, a Jesuit, that had been Divinity-Professor both at Salamanca and at Rome, and was at that time a Qualificator of the Inquisition. As for the rest, I refer you to the book itself. The book was no sooner printed than it was much read, and highly esteemed, both

in Italy and Spain. It was considered as a book written with much clearness and great simplicity ; and this so raised the reputation of the author that his acquaintance came to be generally much desired. Those who were in the greatest credit in Rome seemed to value themselves upon his friendship. Letters were written to him from all places ; so that a correspondence was settled between him and those who approved of his method in many different places of Europe. Some secular priests, both at Rome and Naples, declared themselves openly for it, and consulted him as a sort of an oracle upon many occasions. But those who joined themselves to him with the greatest heartiness and sincerity were some of the Fathers of the Oratory ; in particular, three of the most eminent of them, who were all advanced at the last promotion of Cardinals, Coleredi, Giceri, but above all Petrucci, who was accounted his Timothy. Many of the Cardinals were also observed to court his acquaintance, and they thought it no small honour to be reckoned in the number of Molinos's friends. Such were Cas-santa, Azolini, and Carpegna ; but above all, Cardinal de Estrees. The last, you must needs know, is a man of great learning. He was ambitious to be thought a reformer of some of those abuses which are among them, that are too gross

to pass upon a man of his freedom of spirit, who had been bred up in the Sorbon, and had conversed much with Mr. de Launay. He therefore seemed the most zealous of all others to advance Molinos's design ; so that he entered into a very close commerce with him. They were oft and long together ; and notwithstanding all the distrust that a Spaniard has naturally of a Frenchman, and that all men have of one another, who have lived long at Rome, yet Molinos, who was sincere and plain-hearted, opened himself without reserve to the Cardinal ; and by his means a correspondence was settled between Molinos and some in France ; for though the spirits of those of that nation go generally too quick for a way of devotion that was settled and silent, yet some very strongly inclined to favour it even there. Perhaps it might be considered as a method more like to gain upon Protestants, and to facilitate the design of the reunion that was so long talked of there. All these things concurred to raise Molinos's character, and to render his person considerable. When the Pope that now reigns was advanced to the throne, which was, you know, in the year 1676, he took most particular notice of him, and made it visibly apparent that even in all that exaltation he thought it might contribute to raise his character if he were considered as a

friend of Molinos's and an encourager of his design ; for he lodged him in an apartment of the palace, and put many singular marks of his esteem on him. This made him become still the more conspicuous, when he had the advantage of favour joined to his qualities ; though he neither seemed to be fond of it, nor lifted up with it. His conversation was much desired ; and many priests came not only to form themselves according to his method, but to dispose all their penitents to follow it ; and it grew to be so much in vogue in Rome that all the nuns, except those who had Jesuits to their Confessors, began to lay aside their rosaries and other devotions, and to give themselves much to the practice of mental prayer. This way had more credit given to it by the translation of a French book that was written upon the same subject, which Cardinal de Estrees ordered to be made. It was written in the form of a dialogue, and was printed in France in the year 1669, by the approbation of some doctors of the Sorbon. I am able to give no other account of the author but that in the Italian translation he is called Francis Malevella, a blind clergyman. The book, being chiefly formed upon the model of St. Teresa, the translation of it was dedicated to the Discalcerate Carmelites of her order. This did not contribute a little for raising the credit of Molinos's method,

since it appeared to be approved both in Italy, France, and Spain. At the same time Father Petrucci wrote a great many letters and treatises relating to a contemplative state ; yet he mixed in many of them so many rules relating to the devotions of the choir that there was less occasion given for censure in his writings. They are a little too tedious ; but they were written chiefly for nuns and others, who perhaps could not have apprehended his meaning aright if he had expressed himself in a closer style, and in fewer words. But the Jesuits and the Dominicans began to be alarmed at the progress of Quietism. They saw clearly that their trade was in a decay, and must decay still more and more, if some stop was not put to the progress of this new method. In order to this, it was necessary to decry the authors of it ; and because, of all the imputations in the world, heresy is that which makes the greatest impression at Rome, Molinos and his followers were given out to be heretics. It being also necessary to fasten a particular name to every new heresy, they branded this with the name of Quietism. Books were also written by some Jesuits against Molinos and his method, in which there appeared much of that sourness and malignity that is thought to be peculiar to that society ; they were also written with their usual candour and sincerity.

One of the Fathers, Segueri, took a more dexterous method to decry it. He began his book, magnifying the contemplative state highly as superior to all others, and blaming those who had said anything that seemed to detract from it ; yet he corrected all this by saying, *That very few were capable of it, and that none ought to pretend to it but those who were called by God to so sublime a state.* And by this he seemed only to censure the indiscretion of those spiritual guides, who proposed this way of devotion to all persons, without distinction. He also believed that such as were at some time called to it could not remain long in so high a state, to which God called men rather for some happy minutes than for a longer continuance ; therefore he thought that such persons as were raised to it ought not to fancy that they were now got so far above all their former helps as never to need them any more ; so he proposed to them the accustoming themselves still to meditation, and to support themselves by that when they could not contemplate. He censured severely some of Molinos's expressions, such as that, *He who had God had Christ*, as if this were an abandoning of Christ's humanity. He also insisted much on that of a fixed looking on God, and the suspending of all the powers of the soul ; but that on which he in-

sisted most was, that Molinos (whom he never named, though he cited his words, and described him very plainly) made the quiet of contemplation to be a state to which a man could raise himself : whereas he maintains, that in the quiet the soul is passive, and, as it were, in a rapture ; and that she could not raise herself to it, but that it was an immediate and extraordinary favour, which was only to be expected from God, and which an humble mind could not so much as ask of Him.

These disputes raised so much noise in Rome that the Inquisition took notice of the whole matter. Molinos and his book, and Father Petrucci's treatises and letters, were brought under a second and severe examination ; and here the Jesuits were considered as the accusers. It is true one of the Society, as was formerly told, had approved Molinos's book ; but they took care that he should be no more seen at Rome ; for he was sent away, and it is not known whither. It is generally believed that he is shut up within four walls ; but what truth soever may be in that, he is no more visible, so careful are they to have all their Order speak the same language ; and if any speak in a different style from the rest, they at least take care that he shall speak no more ; yet in this examination that was made

both Molinos and Petrucci justified themselves so well, that their books were again approved, and the answer which the Jesuits had written was censured as scandalous. And in this matter Petrucci behaved himself so signally well that it raised not only the credit of the cause but his own reputation so much that soon after he was made Bishop of Jessi, which was a new declaration that the Pope made in their favours. Their books were now more esteemed than ever, their method was more followed ; and the novelty of it, the opposition made to it by a Society that has rendered itself odious to all the world, and the new approbation that was given to it after so vigorous an accusation, did all contribute to raise the credit and to increase the numbers of the party. Father Petrucci's behaviour in his Bishopric contributed to raise his reputation still higher, so that his enemies were willing to give him no more disturbance.

In short, everybody that was thought either sincerely devout, or that at least affected the reputation of it, came to be reckoned among the Quietists ; of which people it is said there was twenty thousand in the City of Naples, and a great number in Rome ; and if these persons were observed to become more strict in their lives, more retired and serious in their mental

devotious, yet there appeared less zeal in their whole deportment, as to the exterior parts of the religion of that Church. They were not so assiduous at Mass nor so earnest to procure Masses to be said for their friends; nor were they so frequently either at Confessions or at Processions; so that the trade of those who live by these things was sensibly sunk. And though the new approbation that was given to Molinos's book by the Inquisition stopped the mouths of his enemies, so that they could no more complain of it, yet they did not cease to scatter about surmises of all that sort of men, insinuating that they had ill designs and profound secrets amongst them; that these were, in their hearts, enemies to the true Christian Religion; and that under a pretence of raising men to a most sublime strain of devotion, they intended to wear out of their minds the sense of the Death and Sacrifice of Christ, and of the other mysteries of Christianity, &c.

Whereupon Molinos was clapped up by the Inquisition in May, 1685, and so an end was put to all discourses relating to him; and in this silence the business of the Quietists was laid to sleep till the 9th of February, 1689, then of a sudden it broke out again in a much more surprising manner.

The Count Vespiniانى and his lady, Don Paulo Rocchi, Confessor to the Prince Borghese, and some of his family, with several others, in all seventy persons, were clapped up ; among whom many were highly esteemed both for their learning and piety. The things laid to the charge of the Churchmen were their neglecting to say their Breviary ; and for the rest, they were accused for their going to Communion without going at every time first to Confession. And in a word, it was said, that they neglected all the exterior parts of their religion, and gave themselves up wholly to solitude and inward prayer. The Countess Vespiniانى made a great noise of this matter ; for she said she had never revealed her method of devotion to any mortal, but to her confessor ; and so it was not possible that it could come to their knowledge any other way, but by his betraying that secret. And she said it was time for people to give over going to Confession if priests made this use of it, to discover those who trusted their most secret thoughts to them. And therefore she said that in all time coming she would make her confessions only to God. This had got vent, and I heard it generally talked of up and down Rome. So the Inquisitors thought it more fitting to dismiss her and her husband than to give any occasion to lessen the

credit of confession ; they were therefore let out of prison, but they were bound to appear whenever they should be called upon. I cannot express to you the consternation that appeared both in Rome and many other parts of Italy, when in a month's time about two hundred persons were put in the Inquisition ; and that all of a sudden a method of devotion that had passed up and down Italy for the highest elevation to which mortals could aspire, was found to be heretical, and that the chief promoters of it were shut up in prison.

But the most surprising part of the whole story was that the Pope himself came to be suspected as a favourer of this new heresy. So that on the 13th of February some were deputed by the Court of the Inquisition to examine him, not in the quality of Christ's Vicar or St. Peter's successor, but in the single quality of Benedict Odeschalchi. What passed in that audience was too great a secret for me to be able to penetrate into it. Two days after that the Inquisition sent a circular letter to Cardinal Cibo, as the chief minister, to be sent by him all about Italy ; it was addressed to all Prelates, and it warns them that whereas many schools and fraternities were formed in several parts of Italy in which some persons, under a pretence of leading people in

the ways of the Spirit and to the prayer of quietness, they instilled in them many abominable heresies. Therefore a strict charge was given to dissolve all these societies, and to oblige all the spiritual guides to tread in the known paths ; and, in particular, to take care that none of that sort should be suffered to have the direction of the nunneries. Order was likewise given to proceed in the way of justice against those who should be found guilty of these abominable errors. After this a strict enquiry was made into all the nunneries of Rome, for most of their directors and confessors were found to be engaged in this new method. It was found that the Carmelites, the Nuns of the Conception, of the Palestrina and Albano, were wholly given up to prayer and contemplation ; and that instead of their beads and their hours and the other devotions to saints or images, they were much alone and oft in the exercise of mental prayer. And when they were asked why they had laid aside the use of their beads and their ancient forms, their answer was that their directors had advised them to wean themselves from these things, as being but rude beginnings and hindrances to their further progress. They justified also their practice from those books that had been lately published by the approbation of the

Inquisitors themselves, such as Molinos's and Petrucci's books. When report was made of this matter to the Inquisition they sent orders to take out of the nuns' hands all those books and such forms of devotion as were written in that strain ; and they required them to return again to the use of their beads and their other abandoned forms, which was no small mortification to them. The circular letter produced no great effects, for most of the Italian bishops were either extremely unconcerned in all those matters or were inclined to Molinos's method. And whereas it was intended that this, as well as all the other orders that came from the Inquisition, should be kept secret, yet it went abroad, and copies of it were in all people's hands ; so that this gave the Romans the more occasion to discourse of these matters, which troubled the Inquisitors extremely, who love not to have the world look into their proceedings nor to descant upon them. I am told that men are now more puzzled in their thoughts with relation to the business of Molinos than ever. It was visible that his abjuration was only a pretended thing ; for in effect he has abjured nothing ; his party believes that they are very numerous not only in Rome, Italy, Spain, France, and in all these parts of the world, but that they have many followers even in America

itself; one sees them now in almost all the churches in Rome, some of them praying in corners with their hands and eyes lifted up to heaven, and all in tears and sighs, which was no small trouble to those who thought they had quite routed them; but finding they were not so much quashed as it was thought they would have been, by the mock triumph that was made upon Molinos (nor did they believe a word of those reports that were spread of his lewdness). They said there was no proof ever brought of it; and that there are many thousands in Rome of both sexes that conversed much with him, that say these stories that were given out concerning him are impudent calumnies, set only to blast him and his doctrine; and the truth is this seems much to be confirmed by the Bull that condemns his books and his doctrine, in which no mention is made of his ill life and hypocrisy, which had been very probably done if the matter had been well proved; since this would not only have satisfied people, but would have very much confirmed the accusations of those horrid opinions that are laid to his charge, which had appeared with much evidence, if it had been found that his life had agreed with those tenets; for though it had been a just inference to conclude him guilty of those things, because they were charged

on him in the Bull, yet one may reckon it almost a sure inference that he is not guilty of them, since the Bull does not tax him for them.

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